Sally Schreiner Youngquist
Narrator

Sean O'Connell
Loyola University Chicago
Interviewer

Sally Schreiner Youngquist: SSY
Sean O'Connell: SO

Interviewed April 18 2023

Abstract: This interview is a conversation between Sally Schreiner Youngquist, a founding member and first Pastor of Living Water Community Church, and Sean O'Connell, a graduate student in the History Department at Loyola University Chicago. In this interview, they discuss Sally's upbringing, as well as the early history of Living Water, before and after their separation from Reba Church Place in Evanston, IL. Sally discusses the early prioritization of diversity and how immigration to Chicago has influenced the Church and its congregation. Finally, they discuss how Living Water has changed in the 10+ years since Sally stepped down as Pastor, and how the Living Water and Rogers Park have influenced each other since the church moved there. This interview took place in the home of Sally in South Evanston and is approximately 44 minutes in length. The interview took place as part of the Gathering Places project at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. For more information, see https://uwm.edu/gatheringplaces.

Sean O'Connell (SO): Today is April 18th. This is an interview with Sally Schreiner Youngquist of Living Water Community Church. My name is Sean O'Connell. I'm a grad student at Loyola University, Chicago. I'll be conducting this interview for the Gathering Place Project. Would you mind introducing yourself?

Sally Schreiner Youngquist (SSY): Yeah. I'm Sally Schreiner Youngquist and I live at 726 Monroe Street in Evanston, but spent a lot of years living on Bosworth in Rogers Park and being Pastor of Living Water. I'm now retired from that.

SO: Okay. In this interview, you can choose which questions to answer and the recorder can be turned off any time you want. And after the interview is completed, I'm going to transcribe it and copy and I can— I'll send it over to you.

And if you'd like to revise anything that you say, you can let me know. Okay. So do I just have your permission to record the interview?

SSY: Yes, you do.

SO: Okay. So, Sally, you mentioned that you grew—or moved here to go to Northwestern. I wonder if you can just give me a bit more background information just on your upbringing? You mentioned you were in a Presbyterian church. I just wonder if you can just give me more background and your childhood and upbringing?

SSY: Sure. I grew up in a home with very devout parents. My mom was a missionary kid who grew up in Pakistan. Her mother lived with us from the time I was four until I was 20, and her brother was a missionary in Africa. So anyway [laughs], on my dad's side, he had a missionary uncle who was a doctor in Thailand. So we definitely had the sense that we were called to serve the world and not just ourselves. The suburb I grew up in was a fairly affluent suburb in Pittsburgh. Mt. Lebanon. And my dad's family had been part of this church for four generations from the time it was a rural area until it became a suburb. My grandfather was kind of the founder of the township, so I struggled between the elitism of where I grew up and just kind of the needs of the world. And one of the…one of the really shaping factors was a very radical youth pastor who got us out of our white ghetto and took us on mission trips to the Navajo reservation in Utah. And a segregated town, living on the black side of town in cotton-plant Arkansas, and going to a crick collar in Appalachia. So I just had the sense—my life is supposed to be about more than just being comfortable. So anyway, I looked at different colleges, but I decided to come to Northwestern. And one of the attractions was it was along Lake Michigan, and I knew I would like that. And possibly had an interest in journalism, and they had a journalism school. I ended up majoring in English. But, just to say, I lived on campus for the first two years and then some friends—Well, I'm getting ahead of myself. You wanted to know my background. Is that enough of my background?

SO: Yeah. Yeah, that's good. You can just go however—

SSY: But anyway, my family was pillars of the church. My parents were both elders there. We were probably one of the first cars in the parking lot and one of the last to leave. The church had a program of having college students become summer staff for the church and running youth programs. All four of the kids in my family were on the summer staff of our church. Three of the four of us went to seminary. So I guess I would just say we were very, you know, just very soaked in in the church upbringing and the sense of Christian service, call to the Christian Service.

SO: And then you said you met people at Northwestern. If you could talk more or mention again how that came about? How you became connected with the church here.

SSY: Yeah. So I entered college in 1969 and so it was kind of right after Woodstock and after the Democratic National Convention, and in the midst of the Vietnam War. And so there was just a lot of political turmoil, civil rights turmoil and the sexual revolution going on. And I met some other Christian young women who were studying the Bible. Through that, I met other Christian students. And it just made a lot of sense to me to be trying to live my faith in the midst of a very secular and rather depressing context, including the literature I was reading to make sense of things. You know, and to have a source of hope and not despair. Friends around me were experimenting with drugs, and sex, and suicide, and you know, just all kinds of hard things going on. And so we got to know of Reba Place Fellowship, which was this intentional Christian community of mostly Mennonite background people in South Evanston who had a coffeehouse on Friday nights. So my first exposure to Reba Place was a blind date with a Jewish guy to a coffeehouse in a commune in the fall of 69', and I never would have pictured that I would end up there. But anyway, some of my group hung out at this coffeehouse, and actually had an apartment in this neighborhood and started talking with people of the fellowship about wanting to live together. But Evanston had this rule that no more than three unrelated people could live in the same rental unit because they didn't want a pile up of people in the units. But they let us kind of fudge those rules and rented apartments to the guys and to the gals near each other. And two married couples who were part of this group had their own apartments. And so my junior year of college, we all had meals together, 16 of us in a house church on Sundays. And really we were trying to operate as a Christian community, but it wasn't going to be stable long term because a lot of people were graduating and moving on and had other plans. But some of us hung around and were encouraged to investigate becoming members of Reba Place Fellowship, which was pretty serious commitment, like total economic sharing commitment til God calls you elsewhere, almost like a marriage or something [laughs], you know. And this was a time where there were a lot of kids and parents would be suspicious, that are you joining some kind of cult? But I did my student teaching and I was about to enter the work world and I felt like, where else am I going to find people that are so serious about their Christian commitment as this group who really believed the Sermon on the Mount is to be lived out and not just a set of ideals who are living in a racially integrated neighborhood, who were sheltering draft dodgers on their way to Canada and were against the Vietnam War. So anyway, I joined at age 21 and put my little bankroll that I've been saving up for taking a backpacking trip to Europe, put it in the common purse and joined. So yeah, that's how I got involved with Reba Place Fellowship.

SO: So what year was that?

SSY: That I joined? It was February of 1973, and so I've just marked my 50 years of being a member of the fellowship.

SO: Congratulations on that too.

SSY: [laughs] Yeah. I mean… not everybody that joins stayed.

SO: Right. So you were there from 73' and then for the next how many years did you stay?

SSY: Yeah, so I was, I was there until 79' living in various large households with other families and single people, working jobs outside the fellowship as a high school teacher and then as a paraprofessional with special ed students, and then working inside, doing housework and child care. But I saw it—a further experience outside of Reba Place and applied to the Mennonite Central Committee Voluntary Service Program. But I wanted to go as a sent-out member that was affirmed and discerned with others, that wasn't just leaving membership, so I went as a member and served in Atlanta, Georgia from 79' to 81', and then at the headquarters office from 81' to 83' in leadership roles. And then I went to seminary at the Mennonite Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, still a Reba Place member, writing letters back and forth, making visits back and forth. And really, because I've been living in inner city neighborhoods, I really had a vision. And then when I moved back here for my middle years of seminary and an urban ministry training program, I moved into Uptown to work with the Cambodians that were coming to Reba Place Church. I just had this vision of—Here's all these Christian resources in a heap down here in Evanston. Why not transfer them to some other part of the metro area that has more needs for a Christian presence? So a group of us formed and investigated neighborhoods and chose Rogers Park. So that was between 86' and 95'.

SO: Okay. And then after that—when was—well just not to jump ahead, it was around 95' you left to start Living Water, or what would be later called Living Water. What year was that?

SSY: So in 95' was when we started public worship and we called ourselves Reba Place Church of Rogers Park. And we eventually chose our own name when we were more financially independent of them and kind of standing on our own.

SO: Yeah. And then what year would that be? When did Living Water become the official name?

SSY: Yeah. It's in the article. I don't remember. Maybe like three years into it or something.

SO: Okay. So one thing I was also curious about is— when you had already the relationship and interaction with the Cambodian group, or refugees, what made you want to leave Reba Place and then start your own church? What was the thought process and what made you think that was the best way to go?

SSY: Yeah, well, Reba Place Church had gotten so big, they had like 300 people and they couldn't all fit in the meeting house. And so they went to two services, which isn't really, I mean, when you think about Reba Place fellowship and church beginning as a house church and then going to the nursery school building and then going to the present meeting house, it still was like— in the sense, kind of a big extended family. And when it gets that big, just sociologically, it becomes something different. And so I think the idea of going back to a smaller, more face-to-face kind of experience of church and wanting to be more ethnically diverse also and economically diverse. I mean, Evanston's neighborhood was becoming gentrified. Our neighborhood now in Rogers Park is becoming gentrified. But just there was a sense of—we wanted to have what we had experienced here, like a welcoming, inclusive family. We wanted to see that happen in other places. And I think the senior leadership, I think that there were people with a lot of talents who had a lot to offer, but there wasn't enough space for all the people who had things to offer to be in those roles when the church was so big and, you know, had a whole layer of more senior leadership. So I think it was young adults wanting, you know, kind of a hands on experience of doing church.

SO: So, when Living Water first opened up, you mention it was mostly locals. And then there was Cambodian refugees. Were those really like the two main groups that made up the congregation? And then later you also mentioned some of the other ethnic groups… the East African congregation—what was the original?

SSY: Oh, yeah, the original group. We had— my co-pastor Carl McKinney was African-American and his wife is Anglo. We had an Argentinean couple. We had a couple of families that had adopted cross-racial African-American and Indian kids, and we had the Cambodians. So there was that diversity. And then other people, African-Americans. You know, so it was predominantly white, but there definitely was racial diversity there.

SO: How did the—

SSY: The Laotian couple—The woman was Laotian. The husband was Anglo. Yeah.

SO: Yeah. How did the language barrier—How did you guys confront that or deal with that at the beginning?

SSY: Yeah, well, the Cambodian group would stay with us for the first hour and then they'd go, well during the preaching time, they'd go have their own class with their own singing and their own language and their own Bible lesson.
So that was the main thing. We didn't use a lot of Cambodian in our worship.

SO: And then a few years later, you mentioned the East African and Nepali congregation. How did they first get integrated into the congregation? What made them join?

SSY: Yeah. The article that I xeroxed for you from the book kind of goes into that. But, just, we were in the neighborhood where they were being resettled. We had people from the church working in resettlement agencies. So there was an invite, you know, come experience our church and people coming and liking it and inviting their friends. So I think that's a lot of how the East Africans came. Then the Nepalis, we had a man who was from Nepal who was a Christian through youth mission, who knew Nepalis were coming to the U.S. and to Chicago, who intentionally came, so that he could reach out evangelistically to Nepali speaking people from Bhutan and Nepal and he got hooked up with us. I know I've written an article about that too, but I can't remember right now, but I could probably send it to you. He got hooked up with us and we were really glad to locate leadership for reaching out. And so he subsequently did so and invited other Nepali speaking people. And then the Nepali pastor, we presently have, just came to Chicago to study for a Ph.D. at the Lutheran Seminary. He was living way down in Hyde Park, and he was just looking for a Nepali speaking congregation and ended up worshiping with us and then ended up becoming the pastor. And he's giving leadership development to Nepali pastors in the Midwest and throughout the world over zoom through his Ph.D. in ethics. So I mean so the Lord really brought us leadership people and if you're going to have an ethnic congregation that speaks another language, it's just really helpful to have pastoral leadership who speak that language so that we've been really gifted in that way.

SO: How did the integration of the different groups—how hard was it to try to integrate all these different languages and cultures and ethnicities? You mentioned that it's easier when you have the leadership, but I was just wondering how that unfolded?

SSY: Yeah, I think that things like passing the peace to one another and then different languages, after school program for kids, potlucks once a month where we share meals. And some people are just invariably going to be more involved than others who have a special reason to form friendships. Maybe their kids are friends. We have a woman who had served with Mennonite Central Committee in Cambodia who could speak Khmer, and when she relocated to Chicago, she came to us because she knew there were Cambodian people that she could speak Khmer to. We have people who just had a real interest in that part of the world, who have intentionally worked at building friendships with leaders and others, or who helped, kind of sponsor refugees when they came and help them learn the ropes. So I guess that would be just a variety of things and just really trying to be a welcoming place. Even if we don't all speak the languages—people feeling welcome and seeing other people of their ethnic group there, you know.

SO: Yeah. I was also curious how—When you moved into the current place off of Pratt and Ashland, how did the rest of the community react to this new church that has a bunch of

different—especially after a few years— a bunch of different ethnic makeup and different cultures in the congregation? I was just wondering what the interaction with the broader Rogers Park and that specific area, what the interaction and reaction was of that community?

SSY: You know, I really don't know. I mean, we had intentionally moved to Rogers Park and embedded ourselves as neighbors before we ever started anything publicly because we didn't want to impose ourselves as outsiders. So we had moved in as renters and then property owners and had a lot of neighbor relations. And then we'd been a congregation running at—renting from United Church of Rogers Park for ten years. And all this time I participated in the Clergy Group in Rogers Park and networked with the other clergy and networked with the Alderman. So when we dedicated our meeting house, you know, the Alderman came—We've been a polling place. We've held community meetings and the meeting house, like when I.C.E. was going to be active with outing people who were not citizens, you know, and there was a Rogers Park community meeting for that, happened at Living Water. So I think we kind of became known as a place that was encouraging of reaching out and bonding with the other ethnic groups. And so, you know, we've been asked for our meeting house to be used for meetings and things like that. And when I was the pastor, there were a lot of shootings in Rogers Park and I became involved with Ceasefire. I don't even know if they're still active. Have you heard of them now?

SO: No.

SSY: So they were a group that were formed by a health care professional who said young people are more at risk of being shot than they are of dying any other way. And so to care for the health care of young people, we should try to prevent them from dying from gang warfare. And so they had workers stationed around the high school and so forth—Sullivan—and to try to intervene before people got to the level of gang violence. But when there would be a shooting, I would show up, and with other people, and lead prayer at the site of the shooting and Ceasefire would be involved with that too. So anyway, I was trying to be active with neighborhood organizations and stuff, so I think we were known in that way, yeah.

SO: Now, you mentioned the potluck and the after-school activities were a way to create more of a cohesive congregation. Was that the main reason for the beginning of those different activities? Because when me and my group visited Living Water a few weeks ago, we noticed how many different things were going on within the church. I just wonder if you can give some background on how those activities, like the potluck and all that and the childcare, how that started?

SSY: Yeah, I think it just came out of the different gifts of members of Living Water. Like early on, we had a mother who really had a vision for outreach to other mothers and she would meet mothers in the park. And so there was a moms group and it wasn't strictly for people in our church or strictly for Christians, and they just talked about issues of mothering. And out of that, a

women's Bible study group formed for people who wanted that extra layer. And that women's Bible study group is still going on on Friday mornings. That couple has since moved on and done other missional things, but it just came out of the women that are running the after-school program, you know, Sue, who always had a passion for working with kids. And so she was part of having Vacation Bible School in the summertime. And this after-school program was actually started by a woman who just started befriending kids that were coming around. She was working at a crisis pregnancy center. These kids would come around because they had nothing to do. And she started helping them with homework. And so anyway, sort of a homework club. So it's just out of members' engagement. The potluck, I think that was just something from Reba culture, you know, to share and share meals together. And we had done that as a group in the pre-forming stage before we ever had the public. In fact, we did a meal every week when we first got going, like sandwiches and fruit, and then a more full potluck once a month. So just as a way of bonding and a way to have more time to visit with visitors, you know, and welcome people and chat and stuff. So yeah, table fellowship is pretty important and sharing, you know, eating each other's food. So COVID kind of put a stop to that and it's been ramping back up again.

SO: We also noticed that the recording studios—and just the general emphasis on music within the service in the church. If you could give some background on how that came about and what the use and relationship between music and the church—the recording studio I thought was really interesting.

SSY: Well, that's just really new, those rooms. And that's because a couple of our musicians are doing a music school in conjunction with the after-school program, giving music lessons. And it's a way to have a soundproof place to do that while other things are going on. But yeah, lively music has always been very important to our worship and I think our attraction to others and the Lord has always brought us good musicians. We've never paid our musicians. It's always been people who came and have those talents. And when somebody needed to leave, someone else stepped up. So again, God has really provided what was needed, and that's part of our legacy from Reba Place. We've always had good music, people who wrote music, you know, and performed a variety of music, African-American spirituals, folk music, Christian contemporary music, hymns, you know. Mennonites typically are pretty music oriented and have the tradition of four part harmony and not using instruments. But I mean, most of us didn't come from Mennonite backgrounds. But yeah, music is such a part of conveying joy and building faith and just goes to a different part of your brain. So, you know, and then learning how to sing in each other's languages. And the Africans started the African Unity Choir and they sang—they just led worship last Sunday. I don't think they were leading worship the Sunday you were there. But we have a lady that sings when we take the offering and we take the offering in African style. And that was something the Africans brought to us about bringing the, you know, bringing the money up front and then all of that. And so anyway, we've learned from each other.

So: Yeah, but to go back to the diversity and the different ethnic makeup of the congregation, I don't know if you had more information—just about when—you mentioned I think it was the late 2000s that the East African congregation began to grow—if you can just give me more information like where they came from? And you mentioned how they just immigrated to the northern neighborhoods of Chicago. If you just had more background information on the makeup of the congregations?

SSY: Yeah, I am not the best person to ask. Pastor Christian might be better, but I think they've come from Rwanda and Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo, and maybe some from Tanzania, or that they were in refugee camps in Tanzania, often for many years. So they don't all speak the same language—anyway [laughs], I'm not the person to ask because that was after I wasn't the pastor anymore.

SO: Okay. When did you retire from pastoring?

SSY: 2009.

SO: 2009. Okay. What made you want to sit down—just that you thought your time was up?

SSY: [laughs] Yeah, I think as the congregation was growing more diverse, it's like, okay, this is too big for me to know everyone's name. And I put a lot of effort into learning the Cambodians name, and now all these Africans are coming. And I'm not sure I have the bandwidth to get to know all of them as well. And the congregation had gotten larger, and I think my gifts were better for a smaller size. I wasn't so much a CEO, you know, more of a hands-on person. And I was tired, so there was a lot of leadership around. So I felt pretty confident that the Lord would provide someone. So yeah, I think I mean, I'm sure they were tired of hearing me preach. Not that I was the only one that preached. But, you know, I think I was ready to step down—because it had taken quite a bit effort to get the church to this place it was at.

SO: Definitely. How do you think that the church has evolved? Like you said, it got bigger, the congregation became more diverse, then adding some of the other programs like the music classes, the other services, I was wondering how you think it kind of evolved or if you think you got better as time went on, or just what your opinion has been on the church, throughout the years, particularly through the 2010s, last 15 years or so?

SSY: Okay. Yeah, it's, it's really, really changed over time. And I think I speak to that somewhat in that article. I think it's been important that there's a stable core of people who have been committed long term and bought property and are kind of there for the long haul. But as is typical of most urban congregations, there's a lot of in and out. I would say, particularly for

young adults, um, Anglo young adults, who maybe are with us during grad school and then they get a job elsewhere or they get married and have kids and want to live closer to grandparents. So we've formed these really deep bonds with people that are like family and then they leave. But I think we've learned to let go and believe we've been a place of preparation for people who serve elsewhere. We have people who've been part of us, who are now pastors of other churches locally and elsewhere, and also the refugees are in process as they come, and it's not guaranteed that they'll stay. They often find other opportunities where the housing is cheaper and the jobs are more plentiful, and so they were with us for a while and go on. So that happened with a lot of Cambodians that we were originally relating to in Reba Church. Our Cambodian group is smaller than the number of Cambodians that were worshiping when we were all at Reba Church and they were new immigrants. But we have this very, very stable, committed group that has hung on. And just to say, I really have to brag about this, one of our members is the president of the Cambodian Association of Illinois, Sophorn Luong. And that's something for him to be elected to that role as a Christian, because most of the Cambodians are Buddhist
They just had this big Cambodian New Year fundraiser and it got sold out, 550 tickets, and he invited me and my husband as his guests. And it just is amazing to see how the Cambodian group community came here with nothing, you know, like in the late seventies, early eighties, and how they've built up businesses and equity and sent their kids to college. So that's just been an amazing thing. Um, I can't remember the question. oh, how's the church evolved. So, just to see leadership develop and our Laotian member Saysamone Putnam is the president of the Laos Association of Chicago. You know, so that's exciting to see that she, as a Christian, you know, is operating in that position of influence. So we're glad for their sense of call and service to their ethnic communities beyond our church. Um, so yeah, I think that the partnership that Pastor Christian has developed in the team of pastors is really impressive. That's, that's a real development since I was the pastor and how they all operate together and discerning how we're going to do things and how we can incorporate more—like this new thing we just tried. I think they were publicizing the Sunday you were there that after COVID was over and we weren't just meeting on Zoom. We were small enough that we could all meet in one space we had not been before—we could not—The Nepalis met after us because we could not fit in the meeting house. But there was enough attrition or whatever that we could all meet in one space. But then for breakout rooms we didn't have enough breakout rooms. So the African group volunteered to meet with the English group the whole time and then have their service after. But this—the English group going to four different places, so the African group could have their worship at 10:30 rather than wait till 11:30 or 12. That was saying: Why should they have to sacrifice all the time? So just working things out like that and having them advocate for themselves or, you know, not defer to the English peers all the time or whatever. That's just, you know, that's an evolving thing. There's more trust in our desire to be equitable and sharing. Yeah. So just to say, when we moved to the new building in 2005, all of a sudden, like 40 young adult professionals came to our church that had not been part of us before. It just made us more visible. And I worried at that point, that that presence of so many white professionals, grad students, etc.,

would not be conducive to our being ethnically diverse. But over time, a number of those people moved on for various reasons, and then more of the refugees were resettled in the neighborhoods. So just even the composition of, now there's more people whose native language is not English than there are English speakers, and that's that's wonderful. I mean, I didn't know if that would ever happen, but I mean, it's exceeded my expectations. But that was our desire from the beginning. To really be a multi-ethnic community and learn how to be the church, you know, with not white dominance all the time. So it's a slow evolution. But I'm pleased that it has been happening that way. We have not— I mean one of the critiques that I have received and worked with in the Black Lives Matter group, is we have not been effective in attracting African-Americans to our congregation. I mean, there are some. But you have to want to be part of a multiethnic congregation and not be worshiping in a primarily African-American style. So it's hard to be all things to all people. And you can only attract who you have relationships with, and, you know what I'm saying. So anyway, it's certainly got its struggles. It's not perfect, you know.

SO: Do you think if you stayed in Evanston, it could have become what it is today?
Or do you think you needed to be able to move toward Rogers Park and separate from Reba Place?

SSY: Yeah. Oh, for sure. We needed to relocate, and I was relocated there until four or five years ago, and we moved here so I could be more present for senior care, you know, in the fellowship. But we still go there. But oh yeah, we had to be on location to build a credible church there and reach out to our neighbors.

SO: Is there anything today that you would wish— or do have any critiques or criticisms, or just things that you would like to see more of within the church? Or, like, even if it's just a certain activity or service that they're doing, if you would like to see it improved or additionally, what are your thoughts on the state of it today?

SSY: Right. I—You know, I just feel like the Holy Spirit keeps guiding and helping the church to evolve. And my role is to be supportive. You know, I'm not calling the shots. I'm not delivering criticisms. I'm not weighing in with strong opinions. And I am grateful for the leadership that we have where it's gone. And I don't, I mean, like I said, I didn't know if the Africans would stay because a lot of them have moved to places that weren't as expensive, where there was work. And the mother-in-law of our East African pastor, she and her two sons, the brothers of Francine, his wife, you know, moved to Iowa. And I was always kind of afraid that Francine and Alexis would move to Iowa. They haven't. So it's just really key that we have the leadership that are part of the stability. So that's an unknown. Whether all these groups will, you know, a bunch of other Nepalis move to Pittsburgh and Ohio. You know, so we were a bigger group. Now we aren't, you know, so just there's always a certain amount of flux, you know, and people need to go where

they need to go. So what—where is God calling them to put their roots and why, you know, is the church an important enough thing that you would live in a place that's more expensive than necessary or, you know, to be part of this expression of the kingdom of God in one place. And you know—would I like to see more Hispanics come, sure, but we don't do much in Spanish. I mean, we have David, who's from Mexico, and we have Ruth, who grew up as a missionary kid in Colombia and her adopted daughter, Claire. So we have Spanish speakers, but we've not been real strong on that. So, I mean, there's always other ethnic groups that might try us out or, you know, but I don't know. I think that to remain flexible and open and responsive to who God brings. But that's the thing. Did we go out and intentionally recruit people? Did we send postcards, did we put card—I mean, like, I just got a card of a church plant under my windshield, you know, when I was parking near Living Water, inviting me to their Easter service at the Kilmer Elementary School. Did we do that? Kind of. We didn't really advertise ourselves in the classic church planning manuals. You know, it was word of mouth, friendship building. You know, God brought us people all different kinds of ways. And that's the way we've been. I mean, so I don't know what the world has for us in the future.

SO: Yeah. Do you think there is something unique about Living Water that drew all these people? It is kind of—just the combination of friendships, and then just people happened to be moving to this area. Hearing what your thought on that was?

SSY: Yeah, well, for example, you guys came in there. What? Did it intrigued you enough that you'd want to come another week?

SO: Yeah. It did.

SSY: Yeah. I mean, we have a young couple that started coming now who are Asian, I don't even know if they're Chinese or what, that live in the neighborhood on Pratt. Um, walked in one day and have been coming, you know? So I feel like it's what's happening inside the building is intriguing enough to people. Just the mix of people, use of the languages, the theology, woman pastor, you know, just there's lots of different things that draw people. A new church plant that was, you know, I think new church plants draw more people than old churches. So that was part of the excitement for people early on, being part of something new and helping to shape and form it. So yeah, I think that's really what the Holy Spirit brings and our being able to respond and be welcoming and meet needs, you know, and not just be focused on ourselves, but focused on what goes on behind the walls too.

SO: Yeah. I've held you long enough. So the last question, I was just wondering is you mentioned when you were giving me the tour [before the interview] that you were thinking about, if you had time, you would want to write a book one day. I'm just curious what you want the topic to be.

SSY: Yeah, well, there's two possible things. I mean, one is just, living my whole adult life in an intentional Christian community is kind of an unusual story. Like, what was it like to do that? You know, just writing about my experience, because the community has changed a lot over the years. And I'm a big journaler, so I've got lots and lots of material to work with, and just reflecting on that. And I think writing about the church too is another possibility. But I don't know, you know, we'll see if I have the discipline and take the time to do it.