

The Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship
The Burke Library
at Union Theological Seminary

Finding Aid for

Sarah's Circle Records, 1989 - 1996

Finding Aid prepared by: Margaret A. Laemmel, May 2006

Summary Information

Creator: Sarah's Circle
Title: Sarah's Circle
Inclusive dates: 1989 – 1996
Bulk dates: 1989 - 1996
Abstract: Catholic Women's group based in Binghamton, NY, founded in 1989, and dedicated to promoting the ordination of women in the Catholic Church. Correspondence, newspaper clippings, VHS cassettes, worship material, members lists, meeting minutes theatre productions, conferences including "Called by Name" campaign.
Size: 3 boxes, 1.5 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: Sarah's Circle material was donated in 2003.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access restrictions: There are no access restrictions on this material.
- Preferred Citation: item description, folder title, series #, box #, folder #, Sarah's Circle Records, Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

Organizational History

Sarah's Circle was started in 1989 in response to "Called by Name", a campaign sponsored by the Diocese of Syracuse of the Catholic Church to encourage vocations to the priesthood. Several local women announced a public meeting for all women in the area who felt a call to be ordained. About 20 women attended the meeting, out of whom emerged a core membership of about 15. The name Sarah's Circle was derived from the matriarch of the Hebrew Scriptures, a woman who knew how to wait.

Sarah's Circle consisted of both men and women, most of whom were born and raised in the Catholic Church, ranging from early 30's to late 70's. The members were dedicated to the full inclusion of women as ordained members of the Roman Catholic Church.

To further this end the group promoted alternative worship services, theater productions, letters of protest, and workshops to raise awareness on this issue. In this collection of material it becomes apparent that their activities disturbed many people. There are protests surrounding their activities, as well as accusations of heresy.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The records of Sarah's Circle consist of member's lists, meeting minutes and schedules, correspondence, newspaper articles, worship services, theatre productions, information on conferences, member's biographies, VHS cassettes, and the organization's T-shirt. Much of the correspondence is from Yvonne Lucia-Readling's collection. At times she uses Lucia-Readling, or Lucia, or Readling as her last name. Other correspondence is from Patricia Donohue, Rose Marie Noonan, and other members. There is also a VHS cassette tape featuring a CBS television report. The collection is organized in a single series by type of events placed in chronological order, with its related correspondence, publicity and public reactions.

Processing

Folded materials were flattened. Newspapers and newspaper clippings were placed within acid free paper. Staples, rubber bands, and metal clips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes.

Contents List

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Workshop information, 1989
1	2	Member's lists [1989] - 1995, minutes Feb.1991, meeting schedules 1995, member's circular's 1995
1	3	Correspondence: Yvonne Lucia-Readling, 1989 – 1993
1	4	Correspondence: Yvonne Lucia-Readling, 1994 – 1994
1	5	Heresy article and related correspondence, May 1991
1	6	Worship Services, 1991-1994
1	7	Worship Services, 1995-1996
1	8	Source materials for worship services: Stories, songs, outlines, scriptures, poems, prayers, litanies
1	9	Called By Name: Peace and Justice Meeting, 1989: Controversy and letters responding
1	10	Theatre productions: <i>All That I Am</i> , Nov. 11, 1990: Roberta Nobelman's publicity; Correspondence with Sarah's Circle; Bulletins, programs, publicity
1	11	Theater production: <i>Mask and Mirrors</i> Sept 7, 1991: Photo; Roberta Nobelman, personal publicity; <i>Mask and Mirrors</i> Workshop June 21, 1991; Sarah's Circle correspondence; Program mock-ups, programs, publicity notes & lists; <i>Catholic Sun</i> clipping, 1991; Newspaper clippings, [1991]
1	12	<i>Extraordinary Women: Twenty Homilies by Roman Catholic Women</i> , ed. Roslyn A. Karaban & Deni Mack. Resource Publications Inc., San Jose CA. 1996; Letter describing publishing route.
1	13	Article: "Blessed is She Who Believes" by Patricia J. Raube-Wilson In <i>Daughter's of Sarah</i> , winter 1995, pp. 21 - 23
1	14	75 th Anniversary Commemoration of Woman's Suffrage in America, 1995: Photos, Calendar of events, readings and songs
1	15	Sister Rose Margaret Noonan, 60 th Commemoration, 1995: Service sheet, clippings, related correspondence, 1993 –1995
1	16	Woman's Ordination Conference (Episcopal), 1994: Registration forms, bulletins, programs, pamphlets, bumper stickers
2	1	Newspaper articles re: Sarah's Circle 1994, <i>Solo Flight</i> theater production, 1993

- 2 2 Call to Action: Episcopal Conference, 1995:
Patricia Donohue's correspondence, clippings and publicity
- 2 3 *Renewing Our Church*: A National Directory 1996, published by
Called to Action; Related correspondence
- 2 4 List: Formation for Ministry candidates, 1993-1994; lists of names

Box	Folder	Contents
2	5	Theater Production: <i>Solo Flight</i> July 29, 1993: Public assembly, permit, newspaper clippings, letters of reaction
2	6	<i>Solo Flight</i> newspaper clippings re women's ordination in the Episcopal Church
2	7	Letters and articles in reaction to the Pope's stand on position of women in the Church, 1989 - 1994
2	8	Biographies: Patricia Donohue, Rose Marie Noonan, Janet Rutkowski, Joanne Corey, [1996]
2	9	<i>Catholic Sun</i> : Feb. 6-12, 1992 clipping; Jun. 9 – 15, 1994 issue; Jun. 23 – 29, 1994 issue
2	10	<i>National Catholic Reporter</i> June 7, 1994 issue
2	11	<i>Catholic Sun</i> : Nov 30 – Dec. 6 1995 issue; Dec. 7 – 13, 1995 issue; Dec. 14 – 20, 1995 issue
2	12	Bulletins for campaigns and events, 1995
3	1	<i>Wounded Women: Praying for Healing</i> , VHS cassette tape, May 14, 1995
3	2	Newspaper clippings; <i>Binghamton Press</i> and <i>Sun-Bulletin</i> , re CBS broadcast, Apr. 4, 1996
3	3	<i>Sarah's Circle</i> , CBS broadcast, VHS cassette tape, Apr 7, 1996
3	4	T-shirt with Sarah's Circle Logo and slogan "Can We Talk" [1995] See: Box 1, f 3