



YOUNG CLERGY WOMEN
INTERNATIONAL



ANNUAL REPORT
2025



YOUNG CLERGY WOMEN INTERNATIONAL: ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Prepared by the YCWI board, staff, and volunteers. Images, unless otherwise noted, were contributed by YCWI members or staff.

For more information about YCWI, including previous annual reports and details about joining or supporting us, visit youngclergywomen.org.

Contributors

Rev. Becca Ajer Frantz, "From the Chair"

Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund, "Chalice Press Liaison Report" and "Get Involved!"

Rev. Ali Van Kuiken, "*Fidelia* Editorial Team Report"

Rev. Kayla Billings, "Financial Overview"

Rev. Jo Urriola-Schonewolf, all other material and report design

Cover image: Rev. Dr. Rachel Livingston, Rev. Kate Mackereth Fulton, & Rev. Carissa Surber worship at the Baltimore-Washington UMC Annual Conference.

FROM THE CHAIR

Dearest Siblings,

This year has been one of change and exploration for Young Clergy Women International. As we entered 2025, we were gifted some answers and left with several questions. The implementation of dues allowed us to clearly understand our membership for the first time since this organization's founding. We have a much clearer picture of how many people are active in YCWI, what denominations they represent, and all kinds of demographics that we simply were lacking previously. This is such a blessing because we better understand who we are, who is involved and present, and how to best serve our membership.

Which leads to our questions! What do our members need? How do we continue to foster community? Who is not currently at the table in leadership and membership? How do we better recruit and welcome young clergy women into YCWI? How do we let others know how beneficial YCWI is and how deeply it can impact the lives of women in their early years of ministry?

In exploring these questions, YCWI's board reflected on our structure and how to best set ourselves up for flexibility and success. We're in the midst of an experiment suspending our previous work groups and divvying up the board's work into two umbrella groups, one focused on internal matters and communications, and one that is more outward-facing. The hope is that, as these groups get rolling and more settled, we can start inviting our membership to participate in some of that work on a more regular basis.



Rev. Becca Ajer Frantz
photographed at the
2025 Board Retreat.

As we come up on our 20th anniversary as an organization, I am so hopeful for the future. YCWI has come this far because of incredible women who are committed to helping one another be their best selves, both professionally and personally. Our values of collaboration, embodiment, and solidarity are stronger than ever and I can't wait to see where this next year takes us.

In gratitude,

Becca Ajer Frantz

YCWI Board Chairperson, 2025-2026



INVITATION TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

YCWI members are invited to join us (or watch the recording) of our upcoming Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 13 at 11 am EST/4pm GMT/10am CST/9am MST/8am PST. Board members will present a more detailed review of 2025 and highlight upcoming events and projects in 2026. Bring your questions for the board to the session or email them to leadership@youngclergywomen.org.

TWENTY YEARS OF YCWI

Why 2026?

Before the first *Fidelia* article, conference, or board meeting, YCWI began as conversations about connecting young clergy women online under the name, The Young Clergy Women Project in November 2006. We're marking 2026 as our 20th anniversary in honor of the visioning and preparation that led to our first online publication and preaching conference in 2007.

Fidelia Day 2025

As we looked ahead to this anniversary, we began to reflect on the abundant stories that have been shared by YCWI members over the past twenty years. From advocacy to parenting, from navigating a first call to leaving a church well, the YCWI community has shared wisdom and experience generously both within the organization and with the wider world.

Rev. Alice Horner Nelson
performs a baptism.



In recognition of this, we celebrated our first annual Fidelia Day on October 1, 2025. October 1 marks the anniversary of the first *Fidelia* publication, sparking years of story-sharing and solidarity. (After all, an early YCWI tagline was, "Because you're not the only one.") We profiled seven members and alumnae for Fidelia Day 2025, sharing their experiences in the organization and their work more broadly.

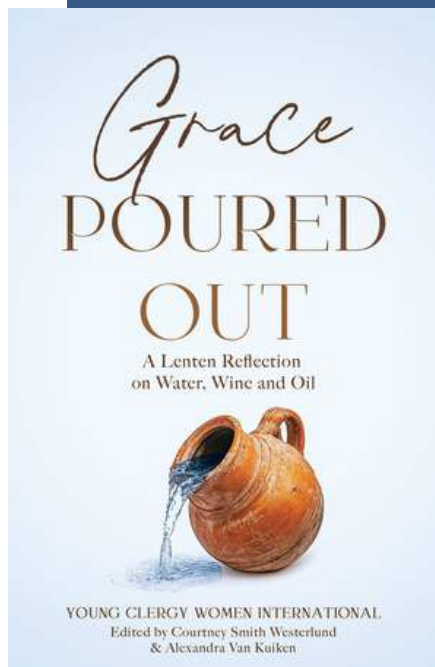
In the days leading up to Fidelia day, we encouraged members to share their own experiences and engage anew with all that YCWI has to offer: online and in-person community, digital resources and trainings, the opportunity to publish their writing, and, of course, the life-giving connection to people who "just get it."

Lenten Devotional and Liturgy

In celebration of our 20th anniversary, YCWI has collaborated with Chalice Press to release a daily Lenten devotional written by YCWI members. Inspired by YCWI's logo, a stylized pitcher, devotional writers focused on elements of abundance poured out in scripture: water, wine, and oil. *Grace Poured Out* was released in January 2026.

In continued collaboration, YCWI partnered with Barn Geese Worship Creative Resources to develop a Sunday morning liturgy to accompany our Lenten devotion. "Pouring Out Grace" explores the questions that arise when we embrace overflowing gifts during the traditionally stoic season of Lent. Worship leaders are invited to incorporate water, wine, and oil into their services to help worshippers embody the reflections sparked by *Grace Poured Out*.

Many thanks to the contributors and editors who made these projects possible.

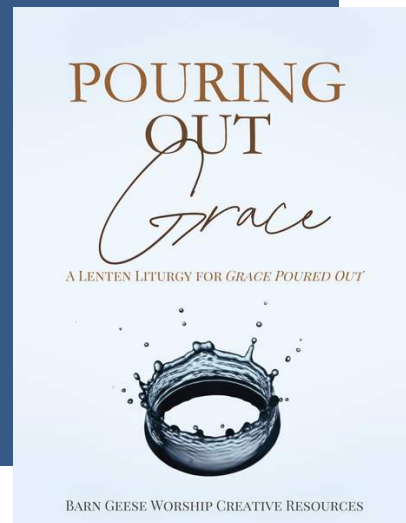


GRACE POURED OUT

Grace Poured Out: A Lenten Reflection on Water, Wine, and Oil features 40 daily devotions written by YCWI members. Edited by Courtney Smith Westerlund and Alexandra Van Kuiken, this Lenten reflection centers on the abundant presence of water, wine, and oil in scripture, inviting you to connect your deep faith with these common elements.

POURING OUT GRACE

Developed as a collaboration with Barn Geese Worship Creative Resources, this liturgy considers a variety of overflowing Lenten gifts and inspires new questions. Allow the vivid images of water, wine, oil, and pouring to spark creativity during worship this Lenten season with this liturgy, *Pouring Out Grace*.



CHALICE PRESS LIAISON'S REPORT

YCWI continues to deepen our relationship with Chalice Press. We are grateful for the work Chalice does that has allowed many young clergy women to publish books that are making a difference in the lives of clergy and lay people alike. With excitement and anticipation, we look to our newest publication coming out in 2026.

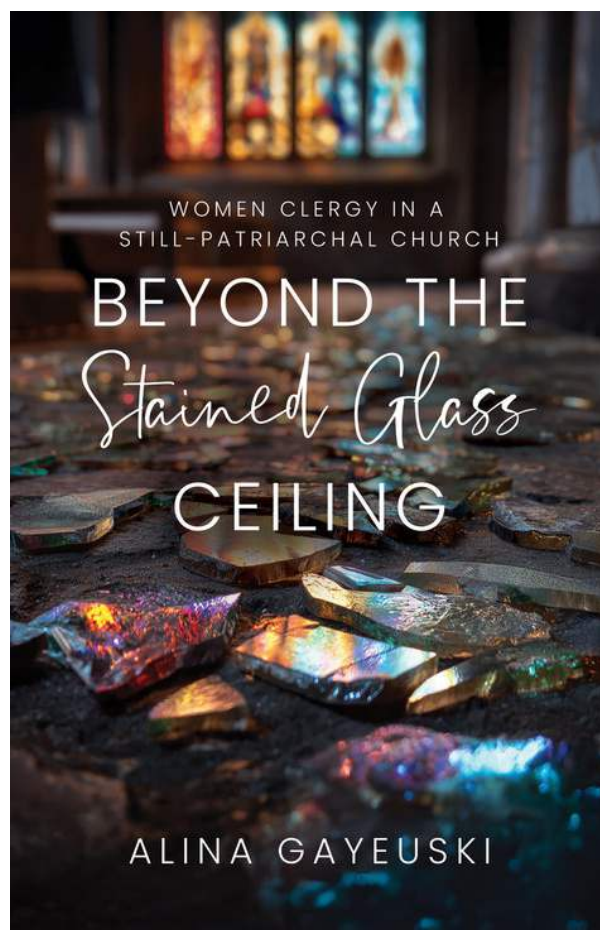
Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling: Clergy Women in a Still-Patriarchal Church

by Rev. Dr. Alina Gayeuski

Ordained but not empowered, women clergy still face pervasive patriarchy that forces them to merely survive instead of thriving. *Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling* exposes this hidden reality, sharing powerful stories of women clergy navigating systemic sexism. It offers a bold, hopeful vision for dismantling harmful structures and creating a church where all can finally flourish.

Despite being ordained for more than a century, women clergy in mainline Protestantism still face pervasive sexism and patriarchy, limiting their opportunities and relegating them to supporting roles instead of bold leadership. This systemic reality isn't merely an inconvenience; it actively hinders the church by costing it vital leadership and keeping it from living into a vision of justice, inclusion, and equity.

Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling exposes this ongoing problem using powerful stories of women clergy, grounded in feminist history and theological depth. It names the problem of patriarchy, defines concepts like "benevolent patriarchy"—where support is claimed but not fully enacted—and reveals why achieving ordination hasn't yet been enough for true



liberation. Gayeuski offers a bold vision for a truly feminist church and provides tangible hope for a future where all God's people can finally thrive.

From the author: My book was inspired by and features the voices of YCWI members and alumnae. It is such a gift to partner with Chalice Press and bring it to life in a way that will continue supporting and championing this organization.

Join Alina for a launch party at United Lutheran Seminary – Philadelphia Campus on March 3, 2026 at 7:00 pm either in-person or online. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

There are many people to celebrate for our amazing work this year.

- Thank you to Rev. Kristen Levens for filling in while Rev. Courtney Smith Westerlund, Chalice Liaison, was on maternity leave.
- Thank you to all the authors who submitted queries and the many readers who helped review them.
- Thank you to Brad Lyons and Chalice Press for their ongoing support of YCWI and commitment to working alongside us.



Clergy surround Rev. Julia Burkley at her installation.

GET INVOLVED!

Become a Query Reviewer! It takes about 15–20 minutes to review a query submission for content, grammar, clarity, and interest. The feedback our review team provides helps authors as they prepare to submit queries for publication or how they could improve or clarify their ideas. It's a lot of fun and there's no pressure! Simply review queries as they're available and as you have time.

Book Promotion and Launch: With each new publication, we need help promoting and launching the book. This can be as simple as sharing information about the book on social media, buying copies for your church, or writing a review online.

YCWI Bookshop: Purchasing books from the [YCWI bookshop storefront](#) not only support young clergy women authors, but also the organization as a whole. If you have a book we should add to the shop, be sure to let us know! (See the box below for more.)

Submit a Query: Do you have an idea for a book? We invite you to check out our [revised guidelines](#) and send us your query. The best submissions focus on Chalice's four categories: your book's hook, takeaways, promotion plan, and how your book challenges assumptions.

When you need to order books online in the US, keep YCWI in mind!

We make a 10% commission on any book sold through our store front (and an additional 10% goes to local independent bookstores). Whether it's for your holiday shopping or book study ordering, you can support YCWI by purchasing the books you need through [our bookshop.org storefront](#). (Folks outside the US, never fear! You can still order books from our book line through Chalice Press.)



Young Clergy Women Authors



By Young Clergy Women International

FIDELIA EDITORIAL TEAM REPORT

This year, *Fidelia* has a new managing editor. In January 2025, Ali Van Kuiken became the managing editor and Shannon Sullivan stepped into a new role as editor and content writer. In June, applications to join *Fidelia* were made available and many people responded, adding an additional eight folks who are editing, writing, or both.

The new energy has resulted in several pieces and series this year including several book lists (on grief, preaching, and books by women), a series on women in the Bible, a splash pad baptismal remembrance liturgy, a reflection on God as queer, a series on Habakkuk, reviews of saints and icons, book reviews, reviews of pop culture including a theological reflection on *K-Pop Demon Hunters*, and resources for Thanksgiving and Advent.

Thanks to the hard work and creative energy of YCWI admin Jo Urriola-Schonewolf, *Fidelia* launched a new website (www.fideliamagazine.org), solving a longstanding technical glitch that made posting articles unreliable. At the same time a new, more efficient process for sending article updates to our mailing list was set up.

Planning has been underway during the last few months of 2025 to change the format of *Fidelia* away from a scrolling blog post to monthly, themed issues. Beginning in January

2026, articles are posted as part of an issue organized around a single theme. This will result in clearer submission and editing deadlines as well as a more organized approach to soliciting pieces for specific columns. Also beginning in 2026 we will begin featuring the writing of folks who are On the Road and Alums of YCWI.

We want to recognize our graduates this year: Courtney Young made many wonderful contributions to *Fidelia* over the years including sermon and



Revs. Molly Kathleen Fisherkeller and Julia Burkley at a protest, with Jackson, a very good dog.

devotional series. Alison Vanbuskirk Philip gave to *Fidelia* as both an author and editor and we are grateful for her dedication to this magazine. Merianna Harrelson was a writer-in-residence often contributing timely pieces about current events. We are grateful that you have shared your creativity with us.

As we move into 2026 with the new website and format, we are excited to make *Fidelia* a more accessible resource for young clergywomen and the wider church. As always, if you are interested in writing or editing for *Fidelia*, keep an eye out for the application when it becomes available in June. Or if you want to submit a single piece, those submissions are welcome at any time. Take a look at our new website, and subscribe and share our content. For more information, check out fideliamagazine.org/write-for-us/.



The featured image from “A Triune God is Queer: A reflection on Trinity Sunday during Pride Month” by Rev. Rebekah Hays Estera.

Fidelia’s Editorial Team

The Rev. Brittany Baurle Kooi, content editor
 The Rev. Shannon E. Sullivan, content editor
 The Rev. Julia Burkley, content editor
 The Rev. Rune Nielsen, content editor
 The Rev. Rachel Sutphin, content editor
 The Rev. Leslie Denny, content editor
 The Rev. Kristen Levens, content editor
 The Rev. Ali Van Kuiken, managing editor

2025 Writing Team

Writers in Residence: Merianna Harrelson, Courtney Young, Michelle Bodle, Rune Nielsen, Ashley Updegraff

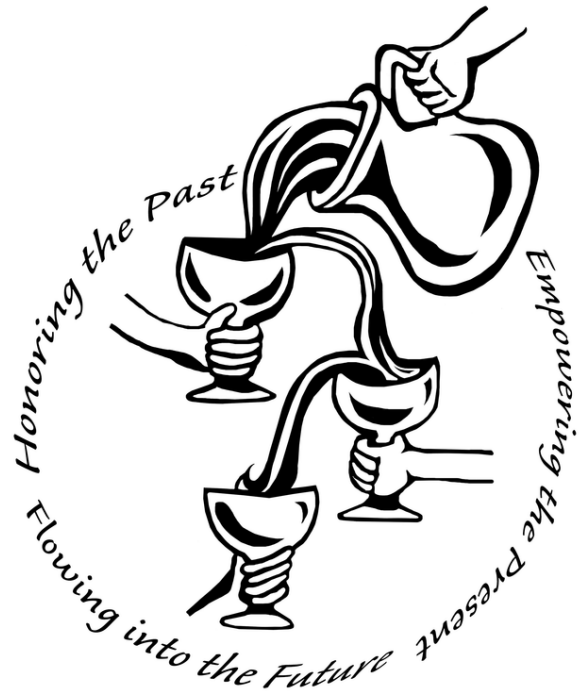
Content Writers: Corey Turnpenny, Katie Steele, Heidi Thorsen, Shelby Baxter-Andrews, Sarah Rutherford, Jane Moran, Leslie Denny, Rebekah Hays Estera, Kathleen Henrion, Cat Connolly

CONFERENCE 2026

Our Conference Planning Team was deep into its work for our in-person gathering in Minneapolis, Minnesota when, in January 2026, it became increasingly clear that United States is facing challenges that have brought a number of concerns from members throughout the YCWI constituency regarding safety, especially when it comes to travel. **As a result, the board has chosen to cancel the in-person portion of the conference scheduled for July 2026.**

At this time, the conference team is working to pivot toward online offerings, bolstered by the local connections YCWI members have made through in-person meetups throughout 2025. For more information, attend our annual meeting or visit youngclergywomen.org/conference-2026/.

Welcome to the Table



YCWI BY-THE-NUMBERS*

629

ACTIVE MEMBERS

1778

ALUMNAE

QUICK STATS

Denominations: 55

U.S. States: 49

Countries: 9

*as of December 31, 2025



Rev. Emily Bostic Skorupinski and her children during communion.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Reflecting on Fiscal Year 2025, we are excited to see the implementation of some changes that have been dreamed about in an effort to enhance the ministry and work of YCWI.

At the end of 2024, the general membership was made aware that dues would become a part of our professional organization. After much deliberation and discussion on how to advance the work of YCWI so that it can be sustainable for generations to come, the process for paying dues was finally implemented. We are thrilled that people continue to find value in this community while always looking for ways to make it better. Members' willingness to pay dues is yet another way of supporting this important and life-changing ministry. More so, in a commitment to keep the organization accessible for all members, discount codes covering the cost of dues were provided. Having heard and seen the number of members who chose this option, we know that this has helped keep our community vibrant.

One new way that this community continues to make a difference is through a legal aid grant that was funded earlier this year by an anonymous giver. This fund has been created to

ASK THE EXPERTS + RESOURCES

2025 saw the first installments in the "Ask the Experts" series, where YCWI members shared their specialized expertise with the community in recorded Zoom sessions. YCWI members can learn about building a church archive from Rev. Dr. Bonnie J. McCubbin, sustainable prepping from Rev. Laura Brekke Wagoner, and the basics of church safety from Rev. Sarah Juist.

These recordings (and future workshops!) are only part of the resources available to members through our Members Only Page. Through this page, members can access the shared resource drive, updates on professional offerings, the YCWI job board, and more. YCWI is more than a facebook group and we are grateful to offer these resources to our members.

Rev. Dr. Katie Steele at a televised protest.



support women who find themselves in need of grant funds for two purposes: to receive legal consultation and/or to take legal action. While these grants may not cover the full costs, the hope is that it will alleviate some of the financial burden associated with these necessary decisions. As you consider ways to support YCWI into the future, we invite you to prayerfully consider if this is a fund that you might be called to support in order to help keep assistance available for those who in need of legal aid. You can give [here](#).

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to continue welcoming new members to Young Clergy Women International as we make intentional efforts to connect with seminaries and other points of contact.

We invite you to prayerfully reflect on how you can continue to help make an impact with YCWI worldwide. One way is to make a [recurring donation](#) to help support the ministry of YCWI and this year's budget as we seek to continue to grow our reach while providing ongoing support for young clergywomen around the world.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in the work of Young Clergy Women International!

Rev. Dr. Alina Gayeuski wears a YCWI stole designed by Story Stoles.



Revs. Kate Mackereth Fulton, Emily Labrecque, Sara Nave-Fisher, Meghan Hua and Bethany Apelquist at a YCWI & Alumnae meetup in Frederick, MD.

2025 BUDGET REVIEW

	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Revenue			
Dues	\$30,015.00	\$15,940.00	\$20,000.00
Donations	\$15,000.00	\$12,013.58	\$11,500.00
Sales, Residuals, and Other Revenue	\$3,000.00	\$4,078.62	\$2,500.00
Total Revenue	\$48,015.00	\$32,032.20	\$34,000.00
Expenditures			
Administrative Expenses (website, banking, insurance, and software fees)	\$6,550.00	\$6,550.93	\$7,647.00
Board Expenses (meeting and travel expenses, and anti-racism work)	\$17,729.50	\$2,840.60	\$21,150.00
Workgroups (Development, Community Life, emergency and bereavement care)	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,800.00
Staff (wages, taxes, and payroll fees)	\$19,300.00	\$18,507.16	\$21,830.00
Editorial Expenses (book promotion, <i>Fidelia</i> editors' pay, and writer honorariums)	\$2,550.00	\$2,230.00	\$2,700.00
Total Expenses	\$47,229.50	\$30,128.69	\$55,127.00
Net Operating	\$785.50	\$1,903.51	-\$21,127.00

THANK YOU

As one of our board members put it, “YCWI saved my ministry and, quite possibly, my life.”

Through the support of our donors, many of them members or alumnae themselves, we have been able to sustain the ministry journeys of a generation of women clergy, providing opportunities for connection, collaboration, education, encouragement, and more. If you have supported Young Clergy Women International in the past, whether through on-going regular donations, one-time gifts, or purchases in our store, we thank you for all that you have given to enable our work. We truly couldn’t do this without you.

As we look at the year ahead, your support is more important than ever. We are working hard to ensure that YCWI will continue to be here for the next generation of young women clergy, providing spaces that meet them where they are and allow them to uplift one another and find companionship during the pivotal early years of their ministry. Even with income from membership dues, the support of our donors is essential. You can find more information about becoming a donor at youngclergywomen.org/support.



YCWI members gather for a Puget Sound lunch meet-up.

BOARD AND STAFF

YCWI is guided by a volunteer board, which is supported by volunteer chaplains and a staff member. Board members serve a three-year term and participate in one of two working groups on the board: Internal or External. They might also take on roles like alumnae liaison, Chalice Press liaison, chaplain liaison, international liaison, or conference co-chairs. Together, the board maintains our commitments to our members, looks for opportunities to expand our work, and visions for the future of YCWI.

We are grateful for the work of the board members who served in 2025 and all the board members who came before them, and for the on-going work of our chaplains and communications and operations manager.



YCWI 2025 Board Members

Diane Kenaston, chair
Alina Gayeuski, vice-chair
Becca Ajer Frantz, treasurer
Kayla Billings, secretary
Leslie Denny
Cassie Heintz
Sarah Humphrey
Stephanie Hunter
Kristen Levens
Kate Mackereth Fulton
Jordan Parker
Maggie Rust
Courtney Smith Westerlund
Katie Steele
Bethany Willers

Want to join in? Board applications open each September.

Rev. Jordan Parker holds her daughter during worship.

YCWI 2026 Board Members

Becca Ajer Frantz, chair
Kristen Levens, vice-chair
Kayla Billings, treasurer
Courtney Smith Westerlund, secretary
Allison Arsenault
Julia Burkley
Leslie Denny
Emily Ebert
Cassie Heintz
Sarah Humphrey
Stephanie Hunter
Jordan Parker
Beverly Peddiny
Maggie Rust
Sarah Rutherford
Katie Steele

YCWI Chaplains

Allison Drake
Breanna Illéné
Sarah Strosahl-Kagi

YCWI Staff

Jo Urriola-Schonewolf, Communications
and Operations Manager

To learn more about our board, chaplains, and staff,
go to youngclergywomen.org/leadership/.

THANK YOU TO OUR NOMINATING COMMITTEES!

The board simply couldn't do our work without the time and talents of nominating committee members. If you're interested in serving on the 2026 Nominating Committee, reach out to us at leadership@youngclergywomen.org.

Applications for the 2027 Nominating Committee will open in September 2026.

2025 Nominating Committee:

Michelle Wildridge, Nachia Tellis, Heather Santi Brown, Kathleen Henrion, Joy Van Staalduinen

2026 Current Nominating Committee members:

Katie Kirk-Costas, Rachel Sutphin



Revs. Sarah Humphrey and Courtney Smith Westerlund process with Humphrey's child.

If you've found your time in YCWI to be life-giving, invite others to share in this experience! Share our posts and pieces from *Fidelia Magazine* so that others can see the work and unique perspectives of young clergy women.

The vast majority of YCWI members found out about YCWI from another person. If you know another young clergy woman who'd benefit from our community, send them our way.



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