

Tim Madigan\*

Book One

***For All Who Hunger: Searching for Communion in a Shattered World***

**by Emily M.D. Scott, Convergent Books, 2020**

Emily Scott was not unique in moving to New York City after college, as a single young adult. She was, however, unique in trying to establish her career, and to date, as an ordained minister. *For All Who Hunger* is her story of founding a church as she continued to discover who she is. St. Lydia's in Brooklyn was founded with lonely people in mind. She describes her congregants as about 20 years younger than typical churchgoers and many are Queer. They typically don't believe being gay is a sin, but want to dig deeper in the Bible and not rely on what ministers told them growing up. Scott, sees herself very much part of this demographic, as she sees herself not fitting in with the typical middle-aged Lutheran pastor, although she is quick to point out that they

---

<http://dx.doi.org/10.26590/madang..36.202112.79>

\* Supervising Librarian, Solano County Library, California, USA. M.A. Copy Editor of *Madang*.



have always been warm and welcoming to her.

St. Lydia's evolved around meals as a way to bring people together, and not the coffee and donuts after the service that so many of us grew up with. The meal is an actual integral part of the service itself. Scott describes a dining room setting where she strategically places gregarious congregants at different tables to keep conversations going. She starts with a prayer, then the meal, and eventually gets to

scripture reading and preaching. All who attend are expected to contribute and help set up and clean up afterward.

Modelled after churches from the first century of the Common Era, the meal becomes the centerpiece of the liturgy. Scott and cofounder Rachel Kroh founded the Dinner Church Movement ([dinnerchurch-movement.org](http://dinnerchurch-movement.org)) that has spread elsewhere in the country.

Much of the book focusses on getting the church going—both finding a location and getting people involved. Scott gives detailed accounts of fixing up a building and renting out space for a theatre to put on a Greek drama. She also shares stories about how her church become family in this intimate book.

## Book Two

### *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People* by Nadia Bolz-Weber

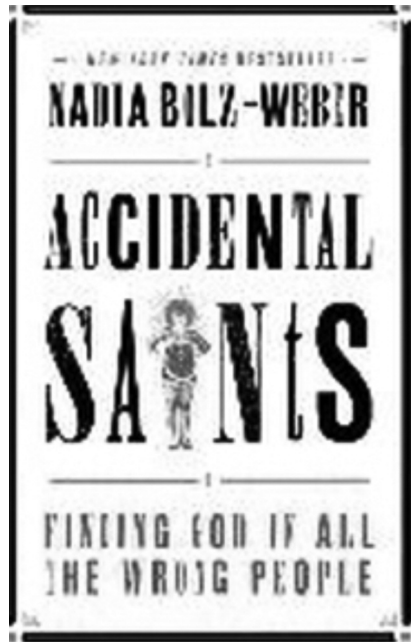
Convergent Books, 2015  
ISBN 978-160142-755-7

*Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People* by Nadia Bolz-Weber, Convergent Books, 2015 ISBN 978-160142-755-7

*Accidental Saints* focusses on Nadia Bolz-Weber's relationship with the members of the church she started, House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver, Colorado. She chose the name because she wants to emphasize how we are all imperfect and have our own insecurities. Following up on her bestselling *Pastrix*, which featured more on her personal journey.

Bolz-Weber grew up in an evangelical home, and eventually rebelled and spiraled into self-destructive behavior, including alcoholism, before becoming a minister.

Bolz-Weber is honest about her own shortcomings, and eagerly shares



them with the reader. Perhaps the best example of that is very early in the book when she discusses a parishioner named Larry. Larry was a pleasant man who made her uncomfortable, so she was often reluctant to meet with him, and she wished she had treated him better before he died from a brain tumor.

Written a few years ago, it covers many current events from the previous decade. Bolz-Weber was deeply impacted by the mass murder of children at Sandy Hook elementary school in Connecticut in 2013. When she decided to pray for all the lives lost that Lenten season, her intern reminded her to include the killer, who took his own life that day. This proved difficult for Bolz-Weber, as she was feeling anger and not sympathy at the moment. *Accidental Saints* is filled with anecdotes of the people around Bolz-Weber helping to become closer to the person she wants to be.

Nadia Bolz-Weber writes at her best when she is vulnerable, which she is throughout the book. A former stand-up comedian, she writes in an informal, profane style. At one point in the book she details the arguments she has with a church leader who tells her to quit cussing so much, something she refused to do in the church, or in this book. *Accidental Saints* provides an intimate look into her relationship with her church and we readers come away feeling that we really know her and her congregants.