

SPEAKERS



The Rev. Justin Berkobien currently serves at Oneonta Congregational Church in South Pasadena, CA. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Theology from Fuller Seminary where he is also pursuing a DMin. Among other things, he writes a [weekly devotional blog](#) and works as a [stage/screen performer](#). Follow on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). <https://justinberkobien.com/>



The Rev. Meredith McNabb is the Associate Director of Education for [Lake Institute on Faith and Giving](#) at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Meredith is an ordained United Methodist clergyperson, and she previously served as the Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence, overseeing clergy formation and continuing education for 1600+ United Methodist clergy in the Virginia Conference. In her early career, Meredith was an attorney, working primarily with low-income victims of domestic violence and on end-of-life planning, along with resourcing local nonprofit organizations. She and her family make their home in Indianapolis.



The Rev. Debie Thomas is the author of *Into the Mess and Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of Christ*, a collection of essays that explore the life and teachings of Jesus. She is a columnist and contributing editor for *The Christian Century*, and from 2014 to 2022, she was a staff writer for *Journey with Jesus: A Weekly Webzine* for the Global Church. She studied English Literature at Wellesley College and Brown University and earned an MFA in Creative Writing at Ohio State University. Currently, she serves as the Minister for Lifelong Formation at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto, CA.

<https://www.debiethomas.com/>

PLENARY SESSIONS

Saturday, June 24th at 3:00 PM

Brave Re-Imagination – Rev. Justin Berkobien

Nearly every church in America, Congregational or otherwise, was at some point taken captive by misguided business metrics that skewed our idea of what it means to be successful. Being a successful church in God's eyes was never about numbers (budget and member size), it has always been about faithfulness. The true life of the church is found in the covenantal way as congregants gathered in Jesus' name share life with one another and experience the presence of the living God.

Saturday, June 24th at 4:15 PM

Lament and Hope: Two Daring Practices for the 21st Century Church – Rev. Debie Thomas

Often, we Christians assume that our calling to be "Easter people" requires us to deny or minimize lament. But the truth is, a credible and Biblical witness requires that we embrace lament as a sacred gift that grounds our joy. Let's explore how both practices must work *together* to deepen our faith and enliven our witness.

Sunday, June 25th at 1:30 PM

Courageous Re-Formation – Rev. Justin Berkobien

If Congregationalism is in decline, it's not because of our failure to adapt but our failure to reproduce. Most of our churches are mid-20th Century shaped, designed to meet the needs of our sisters and brothers who belong to older generations. We must do all we can to preserve the life and health of these churches, but we must ALSO invest in younger generations by facilitating the emergence of the "Next" Congregationalism—21st Century shaped churches that are free to pursue faith and mission in fresh (still Congregational) ways that centralize the Nones and the Dones in our communities. Our legacy will not be the longevity of our life-spans but rather what we did to contribute to the thriving of those who lived on after us.

Sunday, June 25th at 2:45 PM

A More Capacious Salvation: Daring to Embody Good News for All – Rev. Debie Thomas

If the "Good News" of salvation really is *good*, then why do many people, both within and outside the Church, experience it as bad, irrelevant, or obsolete? What would it be like to inhabit and proclaim a truly roomy and capacious understanding of the Gospel? What kind of good news is *truly* good for everyone?

Sunday, June 25th at 8:00 PM

Engaging the Shifting Landscape of Religious Generosity - Rev. Meredith McNabb, Lake Institute on Faith and Giving

Changing demographics, the impact of the pandemic, and the shifting role of religion in the wider culture are all affecting how people are expressing generosity. Congregations have an opportunity in this season to go deeper into the heart of the spiritual practice of giving—freeing their people (and themselves) from a transactional, "pay-the-bills" mindset. In advance of a Fall 2023 opportunity to complete Lake Institute on Faith & Giving's Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising through the NACCC, join Meredith McNabb to consider this shifting landscape and how your congregation can engage the hearts of your people in the joy of generosity.