



## CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTES TO BOOK FOR NEW FAITH COMMUNITIES

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary's **Church Planting Initiative** (now Center for Adaptive and Innovative Ministry) has teamed up with the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s 1001 New Worshipping Communities to create the book *Sustaining Grace: Innovative Ecosystems for New Faith Communities* (Wipf and Stock, 2020).

*Sustaining Grace* explores the dynamic between new faith communities and denominational systems through the lens of stewardship and sustainability. As a collection, these essays suggest that to facilitate ecologies for innovation in our current era, established congregations and new faith communities must image the sustaining grace of God to one another in creative ways. Thus, problems of sustainability are not for church planters to solve alone, but rather are related to the theologies of stewardship and the ecclesial system to which they belong. Issues of vision are not for denominational systems to theorize alone, but are given shape on their historic foundations in the creative and prophetic structures practiced in new faith communities.

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“Sustaining Grace offers a prophetic word in the midst of crisis and protest, when established churches are being forced to confront foundational questions about who we are as followers of Jesus Christ in this world. Early in the book, this possibility is offered: ‘Perhaps the sudden vulnerability experienced by mainline and evangelical churches carries with it the prophetic and disruptive word of God.’ If you’re curious about seeing how the ‘prophetic and disruptive word of God’ may be at work in new worshipping communities and emerging congregations, this is the book for you!”—Cindy Kohlmann, 223rd General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (USA)

This book speaks to a central tension in the growing movement of church planting—the mutual need of and the mutual frustration between establishment leaders and innovators, conservators, and risk takers. The editors—Dr. Scott Hagley, the Rev. Karen Rohrer, and the Rev. Michael Gehrling—engage the question of faithful stewardship with voices reflecting and strategizing on each side of the tension, broadening the conversation to include those beyond the Presbyterian Church, and bringing both the academy and practitioners from church judicatories, church plants, and traditional church communities to offer a theologically grounded, practical, and generative conversation. The book is available online, including through **Hearts & Minds Books**.

Hagley is associate professor of missiology at Pittsburgh Seminary and the author of *Eat What is Set Before You: A Missiology of the Congregation in Context* (2019).

Rohrer is the director of the Church Planting Initiative (now Center for Adaptive and Innovative Ministry) at Pittsburgh Seminary. Before coming to Pittsburgh, she was an organizing co-pastor at Beacon, a new faith community in Philadelphia.

Gehrling serves the Presbyterian Church (USA) as an associate for the 1001 New Worshiping Communities initiative and is a grad of Pittsburgh Seminary. Prior to his role, he was an organizing co-pastor of the Upper Room, a new faith community in Pittsburgh.



In this video, editors Dr. Scott Hagley, the Rev. Karen Rohrer, and the Rev. Michael Gehrling discuss *Sustaining Grace: Innovative Ecosystems for New Faith Communities*.

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