

Generative Christianity: the Emerging Church

“...after decades of struggle, moderate and liberal Christianity is experiencing an unexpected renewal in North America. Many people now refer to this energized cluster as “progressive” or “emerging” Christianity. I have come to think of it as beyond existing categories of conservative-moderate-liberal. Instead, I refer to it as generative Christianity.” (Diane Butler Bass, *A People's History of Christianity*, p. 12).

The emergent or emerging Church is a popular topic of conversation these days. It's a way of talking about a movement occurring within churches of many different traditions, a rediscovery of ancient prayer, liturgical and theological perspectives that provide grounding for contemporary Christians as they face a world of increasing complexity and challenge. For many younger Christians in particular it expresses a profound desire to move beyond polarizing theological debates and deeper into essential Christian practices that make the Reign of God a reality in this world. There are particular congregations and communities that have embraced this movement explicitly and are allowing it to shape their worship, community life and sense of mission. But its effect is widespread and impacts many congregations in ways of which they may not even be aware. In this workshop, we will explore this emerging phenomenon and consider especially the role of the diaconate in leading the church into an increasingly generative Christianity.

Presenter: **The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee**



Bishop Jeffrey Lee, Diocese of Chicago was ordained priest in 1985 in the Diocese of Northern Indiana. He served there as Canon to the Ordinary and in the Diocese of Indianapolis as a new church developer. He served as rector in churches in Wisconsin and Washington State until called to be bishop of Chicago in 2008. Bishop Lee is a member of the faculty of the CREDO Institute. On Seattle's Eastside, he initiated an inter-religious dialogue that led to the creation of Together We Build, an interfaith home-building project in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. He has served on the board of the North American Association for the Diaconate, the Council of Associated Parishes and the board of Affirming Catholicism. He is the author of *Opening the Prayer Book* in the New Church's Teaching Series.