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### **Digital Reformation Happening Now**

*Tweet If You ♥ Jesus author says social media is extension  
of ancient Christian practice*

New York, NY, May 17, 2011—The next Reformation is happening on Facebook, according to Santa Clara University professor Elizabeth Drescher, author of the new book *Tweet if You ♥ Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation*.

Drescher explains that social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, are both powerful tools for the practice of Christian faith and a great challenge to modern understandings of what it means to be a friend, a spiritual companion, or a member of a community. “What does it mean to ‘love your neighbor’ in a world in which a ‘friend’ might as easily be the kid from down the street you grew up with as a woman in Botswana whom you’ve never seen in person and only know in the context of Facebook...?” she asks in the book’s introduction.

Grounded in the histories of Christianity and mass communications, *Tweet If You ♥ Jesus* is an accessible blend of intellectual history and case studies that will help both novices and experienced church communicators sharpen their use of social media to share resources and build Christian community. “We must travel through this landscape on its own terms,” she reminds church leaders, “open throughout to the possibility that God just might be doing an entirely new thing among us—140 characters at a time.”

Drescher offers particular hope to mainline leaders, whom she says have the advantage in the Digital Reformation—if they will seize it. “...The very characteristics that have made mainline Protestants so generally ineffective with broadcast media are actually assets with regard to digital social media, which highlight practices of creative improvisation, participation, and distributed authority,” she writes. “New digital communication practices provide the opportunity to share the riches of ancient and medieval Christian traditions...while also opening our churches to the diverse spiritual perspectives of many believers and seekers...”

For Episcopalians, Drescher makes the topic come alive with examples from Bishop Kirk Smith of Arizona, Bishop Andy Doyle of Texas, the Rev. Ron Pogue of Unapologetically Episcopalian the Rev. Susan Russell of All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena and others.

While acknowledging that much of the mainline church is behind the social media curve, Drescher’s outlook for the ultimate success of the Digital Reformation is

optimistic. “Maybe all of this technology and the change it is creating seems overwhelming,” she writes, “but at the end of the day, we’re people of the Resurrection...Our traditional belief in transformation...both calls us to and prepares us for life in this period of profound renewal in the church.”

***Tweet If You ♥ Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation***

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Drawings by Angelo Lopez

**Review copies, excerpts and interviews available upon request**

**Elizabeth Drescher** is an educator, scholar, writer and speaker on Christian spirituality, with an emphasis on the spiritual practices of ordinary believers and seekers today and in the past. She holds a PhD in Christian Spirituality from the Graduate Theological Union and an MA in Systematic Theology from Duquesne University. Dr. Drescher teaches in the undergraduate program in Religious Studies and the graduate program in Pastoral Ministry at Santa Clara University.

Dr. Drescher is a regular contributor to the highly regarded online magazine, *Religion Dispatches* and a well-known preacher, conference speaker, and workshop leader for churches, seminaries, colleges and universities, and religious organizations throughout the United States. *Tweet If You ♥ Jesus* is her first book. Visit her website at [www.elizabethdrescher.net](http://www.elizabethdrescher.net).

The new book can be ordered through Cokesbury (phone 800-672-1789 or visit [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)), through any member store of the Episcopal Booksellers Association, or wherever fine Christian books are sold.

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