

The Reverend Becca Stevens is the founder of Thistle Farms and Magdalene. Magdalene is a two year residential program for women “who have survived lives of prostitution, trafficking, addiction, and life on the streets.” Thistle Farms employs 40 residents and graduates and houses a natural body care line, a paper and sewing studio, and the Thistle Stop Café. Becca has authored nine books on spirituality, justice, and biblical studies and has raised more than 15 million dollars for the organization she supports. She was named by the White House as one of 15 Champions of Change.

The Reverend Tom Brackett has been working to create lively and transformational communities of faith for thirty one years of ordained life. He has led two church plants, is certified as an Executive Coach as well as a Process Consultant. Tom’s studied the impact of postmodernity on worship and the arts as well as organizational development. He’s served as Rector in three different parishes and served as a Vicar of a diocesan homeless ministry and he currently serves as the Episcopal Church Center’s Missioner for New Church Starts and Missional Initiatives.

The Reverend Mary Frances serves as Associate Program Director for New Congregations in the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A graduate of the Chicago Theological Seminary, Mary served three congregations in the Chicago area prior to her work at the church-wide offices and has experience with redeveloping congregations as well as new starts. She has done grief therapy work which connects to the theme of this conference and she is an experienced, registered yoga teacher. She developed Lunchtime Yoga, a class she teaches twice a week at The Lutheran Center in Chicago.