

Saints, sinners, smartphones

By [David Heim](#)

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Bishops and church-growth gurus have been closely following Nadia Bolz-Weber's church plant in Denver, the House for All Sinners and Saints. An outreach innovator, Bolz-Weber is a traditionalist when it comes to matters of liturgy and theology. She appears to have a special attachment to the doctrine of original sin.

"She often taps her chest and says, 'It's dark in there,'" notes *Century* contributing editor Jason Byassee in a [lively report](#) on the congregation written for the New Media Project at Union Theological Seminary.

Byassee captures Bolz-Weber's theological style while observing the omnipresence of social media in her ministry and in her congregation. Texting and Facebook-updating are just "part of the air Millennial culture breathes," he says. Bolz-Weber tells him that she is never offline.

That turns out to mean both more and less than one might think. It's clear that social media are necessary tools for anyone trying to communicate with the people who attend House. But Byassee concludes that these technologies don't define the nature of the community. It cycles between virtual and embodied encounters, all shaped by the congregation's distinctive brand of traditionalism.