

The Lifesaving Church: Faith Communities & Suicide Prevention

Rachael A. Keefe

Chalice Press (May 1, 2018)

Softcover \$14.99 (112pp)

978-0-8272-2182-6

The Lifesaving Church is an unflinchingly faith-filled resource for Christians helping people who are facing mental illness and considering suicide.

Rather than engaging with the complexity of mental illness, too often the church simply clings to the belief that everything is okay. But when lives are at stake, avoidance is not an option. Rachael A. Keefe calls on Christians to understand mental health, recognize the signs of suicide risk, and care deeply for one another.

Keefe draws powerfully from her own personal and ministry background. She dealt with suicidal behavior in her own youth, and she has decades of ministry experience to her credit. She shares vital real-life stories that show the potential healing power of the church, showcasing times that potential has been both fulfilled and lost.

The book tasks clergy and laypeople with dismantling the stigma of suicide and supporting life, even in the face of immense pain. The book's practical help includes lists of things to say or not say and do or not do when helping people dealing with mental illness, or people who've lost a loved one to suicide. Each chapter ends with a short list of "What Your Congregation Can Do Now," bolstering the urgency and applicability of the book.

While the approach is practical, there are no quick fixes. What the book does best is equip ministers and congregants to care for others early and for the long haul—saving lives, yes, but also transforming their communities into safe places that ensure the thriving of each and every person. That, it claims, is the true gift that God designed for the church to give to the world: healthy life together. And despite the complexity of modern life, Keefe has unswerving faith that the church can live up to its call.

The Lifesaving Church affirms God's love for people who are in pain.

MELISSA WUSKE (Religion 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.