

Rachel Held Evans's labor of love

## **Rachel's work changed the trajectory of American Christianity, but she was always grounded and generous.**

By [Mihee Kim-Kort](#)

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Rachel Held Evans. Photo courtesy of Maki Evans.

During the last plenary session of the Progressive Asian American Christians conference this weekend we heard some incredible stories by the LGBTQIA+ community. I was asked to lead a time of prayer and offered the following words for our beautiful sister and friend, Rachel Held Evans, someone who advocated for women's voices, people of color and women of color's voices, and especially LGBTQ voices.

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Some of you may have heard the news that Rachel Held Evans passed away Saturday. You may or may not know of her or have heard of her, but that's OK, all you need to know really is that she loved us, loved the church through her witness, her stories, her words. Even if you hadn't met her or talked to her in person, you can know who she is through her books—that's her. I can say without an ounce of hyperbole that Rachel was someone whose work changed the trajectory of American Christianity, but she was never above it all. She was totally grounded in her family and friendships. She was authentic and generous always with her time and help. She became such an inspiring and loyal advocate for the work of people on the margins and relentless in this, courageous and fierce. And yet, she always, always erred on the side of compassion, on lifting up our humanity, on lifting up our belovedness.

I first met her through her blogs and books in 2010 and then in person for the first time in 2015, since then we've emailed and chatted on the phone periodically. Someone asked me if I knew her well, and I paused before saying yes, because what I really wanted to say was even though we were together in person only a few times, she was the kind of person who really saw you. I felt she knew me well, she knew my heart, and she loved me. And this was who she was with countless people. She encouraged me to write, but more than that she encouraged me to know, to trust, and to love myself.

There's no way that some individual will ever come along and fill the hole and void left in her wake. But this is all the more impetus to continue her labor of love—all of us together—with the same joy, genuineness, humanity, and more.

From *Searching for Sunday*, which saved me:

But if I've learned anything in this journey, both in writing this book and clumsily living its content, it's that Sunday morning sneaks up on us—like dawn, like resurrection, like the sun that rises a ribbon at a time. We expect a trumpet and a triumphant entry, but as always, God surprises us by showing up in ordinary things: in bread, in wine, in water, in words, in sickness, in healing, in death, in a manger of hay, in a mother's womb, in an empty tomb. Church isn't some community you join or some place you arrive. Church is what happens when someone taps you on the shoulder and whispers in your ear, *Pay attention, this is holy ground; God is here.*

Rachel, I didn't want to wake up this morning to a world that didn't have you. You changed my life, and I will be forever grateful.

*Originally posted at [Kim-Kort's blog](#)*