

Shalom Readers

helping children and adults choose the Jesus-way of PEACE!

Adult Books Available in the FMC Library

The Adult Shalom Readers List highlights those books that focus on peace and other Mennonite-held values as identified by Central Plains Mennonite Conference. *Central Plains “does not wholly endorse the contents of each recommended Shalom Readers book but offers these books as a starting point for deeper thought, conversation and discernment.”* The listing includes a wide range of titles from fiction to non-fiction.

***All My Puny Sorrows*, by Miriam Toewes (2019)**

FIC/TOE/All My Puny

While on the surface Elfrieda's life is enviable (she's a world-renowned pianist, glamorous, wealthy, and happily married) and Yolandi's a mess (she's divorced and broke, with two teenagers growing up too quickly), they are fiercely close raised in a Mennonite household and sharing the hardship of Elf's desire to end her life. After Elf's latest attempt, Yoli must quickly determine how to keep her family from falling apart while facing a profound question: what do you do for a loved one who truly wants to die?

***All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doerr (2014)**

FIC/DOE

A beautiful, stunningly ambitious novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

Marie-Laure has been blind since the age of six. Her father builds a perfect miniature of their Paris neighborhood so she can memorize it by touch and navigate her way home. But when the Nazis invade, father and daughter flee with a dangerous secret.

Werner is a German orphan, destined to labor in the same mine that claimed his father's life, until he discovers a knack for engineering. His talent wins him a place at a brutal military academy, but his way out of obscurity is built on suffering.

At the same time, far away in a walled city by the sea, an old man discovers new worlds without ever setting foot outside his home. But all around him, impending danger closes in.

Doerr's combination of soaring imagination and meticulous observation is electric. As Europe is engulfed by war and lives collide unpredictably, *All the Light We Cannot See* is a captivating and devastating elegy for innocence.

***Been in the Struggle: Pursuing an Antiracist Spirituality*, by Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer (2021)**

261.8/STO

The work of dismantling racism doesn't happen overnight. *Been in the Struggle* nurtures,

challenges, and fosters the work and witness of dismantling racism for the long haul. Filled with wisdom and insight from nearly three decades of partnering across racial lines in this work, the authors offer a powerful mix of practical direction and poignant reflection to empower and sustain those working to dismantle racism, regardless of their stage on the journey.

The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek: A Novel, by Kim Michele Richardson

(2020)

FIC/RIC

The hardscrabble folks of Troublesome Creek must scrape for everything—everything except books, that is. Thanks to Roosevelt's Kentucky Pack Horse Library Project, Troublesome's got its very own traveling librarian, Cussy Mary Carter. Cussy's not only a book woman, however, she's also the last of her kind, her skin a shade of blue unlike most anyone else. Not everyone is keen on Cussy's family or the Library Project, and a Blue is often blamed for any whiff of trouble. If Cussy wants to bring the joy of books to the hill folks, she's going to have to confront prejudice as old as the Appalachias and suspicion as deep as the holler.

The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse, by Charlie Mackesy (2019)

FIC/MAC

What do you want to be when you grow up?" asked the mole.

"Kind," said the boy.

Charlie Mackesy offers inspiration and hope in uncertain times in this beautiful book. It follows the tale of a curious boy, a greedy mole, a wary fox and a wise horse who find themselves together in sometimes difficult terrain, sharing their greatest fears and biggest discoveries about vulnerability, kindness, hope, friendship, and love. The shared adventures and important conversations between the four friends are full of life lessons that have connected with readers of all ages.

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants, by Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013)

305.597/KIM

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth and learn to give our own gifts in return.

The Bread of Angels: A Journey to Love and Faith, by Stephanie Saldana (2010)

BIO/Saldana, Stepah

When Stephanie Saldaña arrives in Damascus, she is running away from a broken heart and a haunted family history that she has crossed the world to escape. Yet as she moves into a tumbling Ottoman house in the heart of the Old City, she is unprepared for the complex world that awaits her: an ancient capital where Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christians, Alawites, Kurds, and Palestinian and Iraqi refugees share a fragile co-existence.

What follows is a tender story of a woman falling in love: with God, with her own life, with a country on the brink of chaos, and with a man she knows she can never have. Wise, funny, and heartbreaking, *The Bread of Angels* celebrates the hope that appears even in war, the surprising places we can call home, and the possibility of true love.

***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, by Isabel Wilkerson (2020)**

305.5/WIL

“As we go about our daily lives, caste is the wordless usher in a darkened theater, flashlight cast down in the aisles, guiding us to our assigned seats for a performance. The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about power—which groups have it and which do not.”

In this brilliant book, Isabel Wilkerson gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.

***Dear White Peacemakers: Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace*, by Osheta Moore (2021)**

305.8/MOR

Dear White Peacemakers is a breakup letter to division, a love letter to God’s beloved community, and an eviction notice to the violent powers that have sustained racism for centuries. Race is one of the hardest topics to discuss in America. Many white Christians avoid talking about it altogether. But a commitment to peacemaking requires white people to step out of their comfort and privilege and into the work of anti-racism. *Dear White Peacemakers* is an invitation to white Christians to come to the table and join in this hard work and holy calling. Rooted in the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus, this book is a challenging call to transform white shame, fragility, saviorism, and privilege, to work together to build the Beloved Community as anti-racism peacemakers.

***Doing Nothing is No Longer an Option: One Woman's Journey into Everyday Antiracism*, by Jenny Booth Potter (2022)**

303.3/POT

With candor and humility, Jenny shares her very imperfect but relentless journey of growing in awareness of racism, of reckoning with her own white privilege, and of learning how to be an antiracism advocate alongside her young family. If you’re anything like Jenny was on that bus—overwhelmed by the enormity of racism and compelled to do something, but uncertain if you can actually make any difference—then this book is for you. Join Jenny and see for yourself what everyday antiracism looks like.

***Expecting Emmanuel: Eight Women Who Prepared the Way (An Advent Devotional)*, by Joanna Harader (2022)**

242.33/HAR

Christmas is about so much more than twinkling lights, sugar cookies, and perfect family photos. It’s about the world-changing, transforming, and sometimes messy reality of “God with us.” As we dive deep into the biblical accounts of Jesus’ female ancestors and reflect on God’s presence in their complicated lives, we can begin to release our expectations of a “perfect Christmas” and instead seek the experience of a holy season.

Through invitational spiritual practices and reflections, this daily devotional centers the stories of five women in Jesus’ genealogy--Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary--plus three additional female figures connected to Jesus’ early life in the days leading up to Epiphany. The devotional includes resources for exploring the lives of these women in worship, small group, and retreat settings. During the Advent/Christmas season, step into the true power of the Incarnation to journey to the manger and encounter the omnipotent God who comes to us in the vulnerable Christ-child.

***Fire by Night: Finding God in the Pages of the Old Testament*, by Melissa Florer-Bixler (2019)**

221.6/FLO

What do we do with the Old Testament? How do we read words written in a world so different from ours, stories so ruthless and so filled with grace? In *Fire by Night*, pastor Melissa Florer-Bixler invites readers to marvel at the Old Testament. Page after page, in stories and poems and prophecies, the Hebrew Scripture introduces us to a God who is unwieldy and uncontrollable, common and extraordinary, and who brings both life and death. Using stories from Scripture and from her ministry, Florer-Bixler braids together the text with the sometimes ordinary, sometimes radical grace of God. The same passages that confuse and horrify and baffle us can, if we are paying attention, lure us closer toward God. This God has traveled with people through cloud and fire, by day and by night, since the beginning of time. The Old Testament is a perplexing book of profound grace, hope, and beauty. It's a book of fire.

***Getting Home Before Dark: Stories of Wisdom for All Ages*, by Peter J. Dyck (2000)**

242.21/DYC

"Lord, let me get home before dark." That was the prayer of Peter Dyck, asking God to let him die before age robbed him of his ability to be kind, trusting, loving and generous. Dyck, who passed away January 4, 2010, at the age of 95, had his prayer answered—he got home before dark. In this book of reflections and meditations he writes honestly about his various life experiences, and of his hopes and fears about growing older. In the end, he concludes, the most important thing is faith in God and building relationships with others.

***Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson (2004)**

FIC/ROB

In 1956, toward the end of Reverend John Ames's life, he begins a letter to his young son, an account of himself and his forebears. Ames is the son of an Iowa preacher and the grandson of a minister who, as a young man in Maine, saw a vision of Christ bound in chains and came west to Kansas to fight for abolition: He "preached men into the Civil War," then, at age fifty, became a chaplain in the Union Army, losing his right eye in battle.

***Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009)**

362.8/KRI

From two of our most fiercely moral voices, a passionate call to arms against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. With Pulitzer Prize winners Kristof and WuDunn as our guides, we undertake an odyssey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, Kristof and WuDunn depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope.

(This book contains some explicit descriptions of rape and violence against women).

***His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope*, by John Meacham (2020)**

BIO/Lewis,John

John Lewis, who at age twenty-five marched in Selma, Alabama, and was beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, was a visionary and a man of faith. Drawing on decades of wide-ranging interviews with Lewis, Jon Meacham writes of how this great-grandson of a slave and son of an Alabama tenant farmer was inspired by the Bible and his teachers in nonviolence, Reverend James Lawson and Martin Luther King, Jr., to put his life on the line in the service of what

Abraham Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature.” From an early age, Lewis learned that nonviolence was not only a tactic but a philosophy, a biblical imperative, and a transforming reality. At the age of four, Lewis, ambitious to become a minister, practiced by preaching to his family’s chickens. When his mother cooked one of the chickens, the boy refused to eat it—his first act, he wryly recalled, of nonviolent protest. Integral to Lewis’s commitment to bettering the nation was his faith in humanity and in God—and an unshakable belief in the power of hope.

***Homespun: Amish and Mennonite Women in their Own Words*, ed. Lorilee Craker (2018)**

289.7/CRA

Ever wish you could visit with a group of Amish or Mennonite women over a cup of coffee? In the pages of *Homespun*, Amish and Plain Mennonite women swap stories and spin yarns while we listen in. Lorilee Craker, bestselling author of *Money Secrets of the Amish*, collects these personal writings about hospitality, home, grief, joy, and walks with God. Hear from one woman who struggles with feeling inferior to her sister, from another about her longing for a baby, and from a third who accidentally bought stretchy material to sew her husband’s pants. Each woman’s story is a testament to the grace of God and the blessings of community. Behind Amish romance novels and tourist spots and television shows stand real people, with longings and loves just like the rest of us. Every Amish and Mennonite woman has a story. In *Homespun*, you get to hear some of them.

***Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, by Jamie Ford (2009)**

FIC/FOR

In the opening pages of Jamie Ford’s debut novel, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, Henry Lee comes upon a crowd gathered outside the Panama Hotel, once the gateway to Seattle’s Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has made an incredible discovery: the belongings of Japanese families, left when they were rounded up and sent to internment camps during World War II. As Henry looks on, the owner opens a Japanese parasol. Set during one of the most conflicted and volatile times in American history, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* is an extraordinary story of commitment and enduring hope.

***I Am Not Your Enemy: Stories to Transform a Divided World*, by Michael T. McRay (2020)**

170.44/MCR

Violent stories surround us. Brutal beginnings, horror-filled middles, despair-inducing endings. We need better stories: stories forged in the furnace of conflict, narratives that kindle compassion and ignite hope. In the pages of *I Am Not Your Enemy*, writer Michael T. McRay visits divided regions of the world and interviews activists, peacebuilders, former combatants, and clergy members about their personal stories of conflict, justice, and reconciliation. In Israel and Palestine, Northern Ireland, and South Africa, he hears from grieving parents who comfort each other across enemy lines, a woman who meets her father’s killer, and a young man who uses theater to counter the oppression of his people. In a time of heightened alienation and fear, McRay offers true, sacred stories of reconciliation and justice, asking what they can teach us about our own divided states. Must violence be met with violence? Is my belonging complete only when I take away yours? Will more guns, more walls, more weapons keep us safe? We need stories that cultivate empathy and tell the truth. We need stories to save us from our fear.

I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness, by Austin Channing Brown (2018)

BIO/Brown, Austin

Austin Channing Brown's first encounter with a racialized America came at age seven, when she discovered her parents named her Austin to deceive future employers into thinking she was a white man. Growing up in majority-white schools and churches, Austin writes, "I had to learn what it means to love blackness," a journey that led to a lifetime spent navigating America's racial divide as a writer, speaker, and expert helping organizations practice genuine inclusion. In a time when nearly every institution (schools, churches, universities, businesses) claims to value diversity in its mission statement, Austin writes in detail about her journey to self-worth and the pitfalls that kill our attempts at racial justice. Her stories bear witness to the complexity of America's social fabric—from Black Cleveland neighborhoods to private schools in the middle-class suburbs, from prison walls to the boardrooms at majority-white organizations. *I'm Still Here* is an illuminating look at how white, middle-class Evangelicalism has participated in an era of rising racial hostility, inviting the reader to confront apathy, recognize God's ongoing work in the world, and discover how blackness—if we let it—can save us all.

Keep Christianity Weird, by Michael Frost (2018)

248.48/FRO

Jesus is different. Go and do likewise.

Many Christians have become comfortable letting the world mold them instead of being set apart by God. And many churches have traded in their biblical roots for complacent conventionality. But Jesus and the church are anything but conventional. The hallmark of our faith is that it sees the world differently than the world sees itself. We are called to be eccentric—off center, unique, different; not conformed to the patterns of the world but transformed by the renewing of our minds. By the grace of God, we are not only dissatisfied by sin but increasingly uncompeled by conventionality.

Laughter is Sacred Space: The Not-Typical Journey of a Mennonite Actor, by Ted Swartz (2012)

BIO/Swartz, Ted

Ted Swartz and his Ted & Company TheaterWorks team are known for blending Bible stories with comedy and poignancy and pushing the envelope on issues of faith and social justice. But who is Ted Swartz? Follow along in this engaging memoir as Swartz finds his way as a middle child in an eastern Pennsylvania traditional Mennonite home to his early work in the family butcher shop. Journey with Ted through the decision of uprooting his young family to attend seminary and then embracing life as a writer and actor. Get a glimpse into the friendship that led to the formation of the popular acting duo Ted & Lee. This uniquely honest backstage tour of an artist's life and mind combines side-splitting reminiscences, heart-rending accounts of loss, and touching stories of restored faith and love. Swartz's engaging humor blends with his own stories of triumph and tragedy, and helps readers understand their own sense of place and how they're shaped by those around them.

Life of Pi, by Yann Martel (2001)

FIC/MAR

Life of Pi is a fantasy adventure novel. The protagonist, Piscine Molitor "Pi"; Patel, a Tamil boy from Pondicherry, explores issues of spirituality and practicality from an early age. The son of a zookeeper, Pi has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior and a fervent love of stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes.

***The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border*, by Francisco Cantu (2019)**
BIO/Cantu, Francis

For Francisco Cantú, the border is in the blood: his mother, a park ranger and daughter of a Mexican immigrant, raised him in the scrublands of the Southwest. Driven to understand the hard realities of the landscape he loves, Cantú joins the Border Patrol. He and his partners learn to track other humans under blistering sun and through frigid nights. They haul in the dead and deliver to detention those they find alive. Plagued by a growing awareness of his complicity in a dehumanizing enterprise, he abandons the Patrol for civilian life. But when an immigrant friend travels to Mexico to visit his dying mother and does not return, Cantú discovers that the border has migrated with him, and now he must know the full extent of the violence it wreaks, on both sides of the line.

(This book contains adult language and some descriptions of violence).

***Love in a Time of Hate: The Story of Magda and Andre Trocme and the Village that Said No to the Nazis*, by Hanna Schott (2017)**

BIO/Trocme

Love in a Time of Hate tells the gripping tale of Magda and Andre Trocme, the couple that transformed a small town in the mountains of southern France into a place of safety during the Holocaust. At great risk to their own lives, the Trocmes led efforts in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon to hide more than three thousand Jewish children and adults who were fleeing the Nazis. In this astonishing story of courage, romance, and resistance, learn what prompted Andre and Magda to risk everything for the sake of strangers who showed up at their door. Building on the story told in *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, German journalist Hanna Schott portrays a vivid story of resisting evil and sheltering refugees with striking resonance for today.

***Making Friends Among the Taliban: A Peacemaker's Journey in Afghanistan*, by Jonathan Larson (2012)**

BIO/Terry, Dan

First-time author Larson is compelled to tell the story of the man who had been his best man: Dan Terry. The son of American Methodist missionaries, Terry had been raised in northern India and was familiar with the Hindu Kush Mountain range between Afghanistan and Pakistan. For more than 40 years—through the Soviet invasion, Taliban takeover, and NATO-led invasion, Terry traveled the Afghan highlands making friends, becoming a trusted guide... toward a more peaceable country. It is doubtful that anyone other than Terry's childhood friend Larson could have captured the nuances, adventure, faith undertones, and raw beauty of Terry's story. Larson spins a tale of heroism, love, recklessness, and altruism played out against one of the world's oldest cultures and the longest-running U.S. war. In 2010, Terry's execution-style murder, along with that of nine other aid workers as they returned to Kabul from a medical mission, made international news. While reminiscent of Greg Mortenson's *Three Cups of Tea*, Larson's look at an American in Afghanistan takes the reader beyond any facile definitions of enemy into a territory of dangerous love, where peace, sturdy and resilient, can neither be built nor dismantled at the point of a gun.

***Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*, by Tracy Kidder (2004)**

BIO/Farmer

In medical school, Paul Farmer found his life's calling: to cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them most. Tracy Kidder's magnificent account shows how one person can make a difference in solving global health problems through a clear-eyed understanding of the interaction of politics, wealth, social systems, and disease. Profound and powerful, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* takes us from

Harvard to Haiti, Peru, Cuba, and Russia as Farmer changes people's minds through his dedication to the philosophy that "the only real nation is humanity."
(Some adult language and themes)

***Mudhouse Sabbath*, by Lauren F Winner (2003)**

248.4/WIN

After her conversion from Orthodox Judaism to Christianity, author Lauren Winner found that her life was indelibly marked by the rich traditions and spiritual practices of Judaism. She set out to discover how she could incorporate some of these practices into her new faith. Winner presents eleven Jewish spiritual practices that can transform the way Christians view the world and God. Whether discussing attentive eating, marking the days while grieving, the community that supports a marriage, candle-lighting, or the differences between the Jewish Sabbath and a Sunday spent at the Mudhouse, her favorite coffee shop, Winner writes with appealing honesty and rare insight.

***My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for His Family's Past* by Ariel Sabar (2009)**

BIO/Sabar, Ariel

In a remote corner of the world, forgotten for nearly three thousand years, lived an enclave of Kurdish Jews so isolated that they still spoke Aramaic, the language of Jesus. Mostly illiterate, they were self-made mystics and gifted storytellers and humble peddlers who dwelt in harmony with their Muslim and Christian neighbors in the mountains of northern Iraq. To these descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, Yona Sabar was born. Yona's son Ariel grew up in Los Angeles, where Yona had become an esteemed professor, dedicating his career to preserving his people's traditions. Ariel wanted nothing to do with his father's strange immigrant heritage—until he had a son of his own. This powerful book is an improbable story of tolerance and hope set in what today is the very center of the world's attention.

***Mystics and Misfits: Meeting God Through St. Francis and Other Unlikely Saints*, by Christiana N. Peterson (2018)**

248.2/PET

With untested ideals and a thirst for adventure, Christiana Peterson and her family moved to an intentional Christian farming community in the rural Midwest. It sounded like a simple and faithful way to follow Jesus, not to mention a great place to raise kids. In *Mystics and Misfits*, Peterson discovers that community life is never simple and that she needs resources beyond her own to weather the anxiety and exhaustion of trying to save a dying farm and a floundering congregation. She turns to Christian mystics like Francis of Assisi, Simone Weil, and Dorothy Day to find sustenance for the everyday struggles and unique hardships of community life. With a contemplative's spirit and poet's eye, Peterson leads readers into an encounter with the God of the wild mystics and the weird misfits.

***Night*, by Elie Wiesel (2006)**

BIO/Wiesel, Elie

Night is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. This new translation by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this seminal memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. And in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of *Night* and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man.

***Not Quite Fine: Mental Health, Faith, and Showing Up for One Another*, by Carlene Hill Byron (2021)**

261.8/BYR

In *Not Quite Fine*, author Carlene Hill Byron tackles the mounting dilemmas that pastors and churches face around mental health. Medicines and therapies have their roles in supporting those who live with mental health problems or mental illness. But God's own body as the church is intended to be our greatest support in this world. How can the church step up for such a time as this? How can the body of Christ become a healing community for its members in pain--a place where the weary find strength for the journey, a place where those who mourn are raised up as rebuilders of the cities left in ruins? Drawing on her own history of mental health problems and her experience as a teacher and lay counselor, Byron offers words of hope for those who struggle as well as practical insights to equip congregations to better support those who are suffering in their midst.

***Ordinary Miracles: Awakening to the Holy Work of Parenting*, by Rachel S. Gerber (2014)**

248.8/GER

Where is God in the midst of temper tantrums, laundry, and accidents? Find out in this honest devotional memoir about mothering three busy boys. In *Ordinary Miracles*, ordained Mennonite minister and blogger Rachel S. Gerber gives voice to the grit of parenting with stories of hope. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, who failed at first to recognize Christ walking beside them, Rachel learns to discover the gifts and holy calling hidden in the events of harried family life. Overburdened parents will find reassurance in Rachel's own story of how, in her darkest hour of disorientation, in the most mundane and ordinary days of motherhood, and in moments of exhilaration, joy, and beauty, God is present.

***Please Pass the Faith: The Art of Spiritual Grandparenting*, by Elsie H. R. Rempel (2012)**

248.8/REM

By 2030, almost one-third of North Americans will be over age 65. How will this affect the church? Author Elsie Rempel believes that the swelling ranks of new seniors represent a huge spiritual resource. In *Please Pass the Faith* she draws from real life and from Christian formation experts in helping seniors and other adults foster relationships with children and youth. She also offers practical ideas for integrating children and youth into church life, all the while nurturing one's own spiritual life as an elder.

***Scratching the Woodchuck*, by David Kline (1997)**

577.5/KLI

Like its title, this collection of essays on nature, farming, animals, insects, and other topics bespeaks the gentle demeanor and appreciation for nature that shape the author's descriptions of the world around him. Whether sharing his fondness for watching clouds while he rests his horses or for planting flowers in his favorite spot in the woods, David Kline offers a view of life that few of us take time to experience. *Scratching the Woodchuck* resounds with knowledge, reverence, and a joyful spirit, and to follow Kline's explorations of the landscape and animals around his farm is to sense and come to share his respect for and unity with the earth.

***The Shadow System: Mass Incarceration and the American Family*, by Sylvia A Harvey (2020)**

362.82/HAR

In *The Shadow System*, award-winning journalist Sylvia A. Harvey follows the fears, challenges, and small victories of three families struggling to live within the confines of a brutal system. In Florida, a young father tries to maintain a relationship with his daughter despite a sentence of life without parole. In Kentucky, where the opioid epidemic has led to the increased incarceration of women, many of whom are white, one mother fights for custody of her children. In Mississippi, a wife steels herself for her husband's thirty-ninth year in prison and does her best to keep their sons close.

Through these stories, Harvey reveals a shadow system of laws and regulations enacted to dehumanize the incarcerated and profit off their families -- from mandatory sentencing laws, to restrictions on prison visitation, to astronomical charges for brief phone calls.

The Shadow System is an eye-opening account of the way incarceration has impacted generations of American families; it delivers a galvanizing clarion call to fix this broken system.

***Shalom Sistas: Living Wholeheartedly in a Brokenhearted World*, by Osheta Moore (2017)**

261.8/MOO

Like a lot of women, blogger Osheta Moore loved the idea of shalom: God's dream for a world that is whole, vibrant, and flourishing. But honestly: who's got the time? So one night she whispered a dangerous prayer: God, show me the things that make for peace... In *Shalom Sistas*, Moore shares what she learned when she challenged herself to study peace in the Bible for forty days. Taking readers through the twelve points of the *Shalom Sistas'* Manifesto, Moore experiments with practices of everyday peacemaking and invites readers to do the same. From dropping "love bombs" on a family vacation, to talking to the coach who called her son the n-word, to spreading shalom with a Swiffer, Moore offers bold steps for crossing lines between black and white, suburban and urban, rich and poor. What if a bunch of Jesus-following women catch a vision of a vibrant, whole, flourishing world? What happens when *Shalom Sistas* unite?

***Signs of Life: Resurrecting Hope Out of Ordinary Losses*, by Stephanie Lobdell (2019)**

248.8/LOB

In *Signs of Life*, Lobdell shares stories her own depression, loss of confidence, and disillusionment with the church. "My ordinary losses are probably no bigger than yours, and are maybe even smaller," says Lobdell. "My ordinary losses are just that: Ordinary and plain, maybe even dull. But they are real. And their smallness does not negate their power or their importance in shaping me. Such ordinary losses in your life—and maybe some extraordinary ones—have likely wounded and shaped you."

***Strength in What Remains*, by Tracy Kidder (2009)**

305.8/KID

In *Strength in What Remains*, Tracy Kidder gives us the story of one man's inspiring American journey and of the ordinary people who helped him, providing testament to the power of second chances. Deo arrives in the United States from Burundi in search of a new life. Having survived a civil war and genocide, he lands at JFK airport with two hundred dollars, no English, and no contacts. He ekes out a precarious existence delivering groceries, living in Central Park, and learning English by reading dictionaries in bookstores. Then Deo begins to meet the strangers who will change his life, pointing him eventually in the direction of Columbia University, medical school, and a life devoted to healing. Kidder breaks new ground in telling

this unforgettable story as he travels with Deo back over a turbulent life and shows us what it means to be fully human.

***Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*, by Vivek H. Murthy, MD (2020)**

158.2/MUR

Humans are social creatures: In this simple and obvious fact lies both the problem and the solution to the current crisis of loneliness. In his groundbreaking book, the 19th surgeon general of the United States Dr. Vivek Murthy makes a case for loneliness as a public health concern: a root cause and contributor to many of the epidemics sweeping the world today from alcohol and drug addiction to violence to depression and anxiety. Loneliness, he argues, is affecting not only our health, but also how our children experience school, how we perform in the workplace, and the sense of division and polarization in our society.

But, at the center of our loneliness is our innate desire to connect. We have evolved to participate in community, to forge lasting bonds with others, to help one another, and to share life experiences. We are, simply, better together.

***Tongue-Tied: Learning the Lost Art of Talking About Faith*, by Sara Wenger Shenk (2021)**

248.5/SHE

Many Christians easily and eagerly talk about movies, sports, politics, jobs, and emotions. So why are we tongue-tied when it comes to talking about our faith--even with each other? Even with our kids? What renders us incapable, embarrassed, or hesitant to talk about God?

***Trouble I've Seen, Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*, by Drew Hart (2016)**

277.3/HAR

In this provocative book, theologian and blogger Drew G. I. Hart places police brutality, mass incarceration, anti-black stereotypes, poverty, and everyday acts of racism within the larger framework of white supremacy. He argues that white Christians have repeatedly gotten it wrong about race because dominant culture and white privilege have so thoroughly shaped their assumptions. He also challenges black Christians about neglecting the most vulnerable in their own communities. Leading readers toward Jesus, Hart offers concrete practices for churches that seek solidarity with the oppressed and are committed to racial justice. "What if all Christians listened to the stories of those on the racialized margins? How might the church be changed by the trouble they've seen?"

***Waking Up White: and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, by Debby Irving (2014)**

305.8/IRV

Waking up White is the book Irving wishes someone had handed her decades ago. By sharing her sometimes cringe-worthy struggle to understand racism and racial tensions, she offers a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. As Irving unpacks her own long-held beliefs about colorblindness, being a good person, and wanting to help people of color, she reveals how each of these well-intentioned mindsets actually perpetuated her ill-conceived ideas about race. She also explains why and how she's changed the way she talks about racism, works in racially mixed groups and understands the antiracism movement as a whole. Exercises at the end of each chapter prompt readers to explore their own racialized ideas. *Waking Up White's* personal narrative is designed to work well as a rapid read, a book group book, or support reading for courses exploring racial and cultural issues.

***Walking the Bible: A Journey by Land Through the Five Books of Moses*, by Bruce Feiler (2006)**

220.9/FEI

The stories in the first five books of the Bible, also known as the Torah, come alive as Feiler searches across three continents for the stories and heroes shared by Christians and Jews. You will visit the slopes of Mount Ararat, where Noah's ark landed, trek to the desert outpost where Abraham first heard the words of God, and scale the summit where Moses received the Ten Commandments. A once-in-a-lifetime journey, *Walking the Bible* offers new insights into the roots of our common faith and uncovers fresh answers to the most profound questions of the human spirit.

***The Water Dancer*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2019)**

FIC/COA/Water

Young Hiram Walker was born into bondage. When his mother was sold away, Hiram was robbed of all memories of her—but was gifted with a mysterious power. Years later, when Hiram almost drowns in a river, that same power saves his life. This brush with death births an urgency in Hiram and a daring scheme: to escape from the only home he's ever known. This is the dramatic story of an atrocity inflicted on generations of women, men, and children—the violent and capricious separation of families—and the war they waged to simply make lives with the people they loved. Written by one of today's most exciting thinkers and writers, *The Water Dancer* is a propulsive, transcendent work that restores the humanity of those from whom everything was stolen.

(Please note, this book is a work of fantasy fiction and contains magical elements. Though it is an acclaimed, thought-provoking book, it may not be for all readers.)

***Who Will Be a Witness: Igniting Activism for God's Justice, Love and Deliverance*, by Drew G.I. Hart (2020)**

261.8/HAR

Churches have begun awakening to social and political injustices, often carried out in the name of Christianity. But once awakened, how will we respond? *Who Will Be a Witness* offers a vision for communities of faith to organize for deliverance and justice in their neighborhoods, states, and nation as an essential part of living out the call of Jesus.