

Books For Summer Reading

I am offering some recommendations for summer reading. Disciple students may wish to continue their biblical studies. Theological explorers love a controversial read! Spiritual autobiography encourages our journey. Long road trips and beach umbrellas call for some fun. May I recommend the book reviews at:

www.umc.org Click on "My Spiritual Journey". Check out the book, movie, and music reviews. Thank you, Terri Beecher, for expanding our book table. –Rev. Janet

FOR SERIOUS STUDENTS!
Several classes have been offered at St. Luke's on The Heart of Christianity by Marcus Borg, the Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University. I prefer his previous "trilogy" for a deeper exploration of the concepts. Borg, though controversial, is one of the most influential progressive voices today.

Reading the Bible Again for the First Time, Marcus Borg (Harper San Francisco, 2001)
Contrasts the "literal-factual" way of reading the Bible and a "historical – metaphorical" approach to the scriptures. Excellent post-Disciple read!

The God We Never Knew, Marcus Borg (Harper San Francisco, 1998)
Explores the concept of "panentheism", God as both transcendent (God is more than everything.) and immanent (God is in everything).

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time, Marcus Borg (Harper San Francisco, 1994)

Looks at Jesus from two very important perspectives: the pre-Easter Jesus as a figure of history before his death, which Borg concentrates on, and the post-Easter Jesus of Christian tradition and experience.

The Sins of Scripture, John Shelby Spong (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005)
Always controversial and challenging, I am coming to appreciate the voice of this liberal retired Episcopal bishop. I rarely agree with him... until now. Though I continue to

chaff at his style, I am appreciative of his sharp criticism of the ways that scripture has been interpreted to abuse persons and creation.

If Grace is True: Why God Will Save Every Person (2003)

If God Is Love: Rediscovering Grace in an Ungracious World (2004)

Philip Gulley and James Mulholland (HarperSanFrancisco)

Both of these books were gifts to me from a United Methodist colleague who is friends with the authors. Philip Gulley, a Quaker minister, and James Mulholland, formerly of the American Baptist and United Methodist traditions, asks important questions about God's nature. Though these writers base much of their arguments on personal "experience" (and who doesn't!) and are a bit dismissive with "tradition" and "scripture" as thought categories, I enjoyed the depth (and audacity) of their questions. While checking on the publication dates on Amazon.com, I discovered some aggressive rebuttal reviews. Check them out in order to understand why these gentle books are making some people very angry.

LIGHTER FARE!

Solving the DaVinci Code Mystery, Brandon Gilvin (Chalis Press, 2004)

The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown may be on your summer reading list. If so, you will be asking "What's fact and what's fiction?" Gilvin uses this novel's points of intrigue to take readers on a quest for the truth about many of the biblical and church history issues the novel raises. He explores scripture, non-canonical writings, historical traditions and current thought to help readers untangle the tale.

Finding God in Unexpected Places, Philip Yancey (Waterbrook Press, 2005)
The newest offering by Phil Yancey reflects a man continuing his pilgrimage from Southern fundamentalism to encountering the Creator of a good and grace-filled world. This is an collection of essays that invites the reader to see "rumors of transcendence – the footprints of God" in

unexpected, surprising places. I enjoy Yancey, a traditionalist and a delightful storyteller.

Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith, Anne Lamott (Riverhead books, 2005)

This book was a gift from Rev. Fred. It was my first Lamott and I'm going to have to go back and read Traveling Mercies (1998). Lamott spins delicate stories with a "twist" as this liberal free-spirit struggles with aging, an adolescent son, her mother's Alzheimer's, and the global village. She is not a fan of Republican politics; but stay with her. She calls on us to honor the connected-ness of the human community.

Caramelo, Sandra Cisneros (Vintage Books, 2002)

Mayor Hickenlooper is asking Denver to read this book! As a part of his One City, One Book commitment, he is inviting us to read this poignant, funny story of a multi-generational family who explores their family roots every summer while traveling from Chicago to Mexico City to the home of the "Little Grandfather and Awful Grandmother." Tattered Cover hosted book-signings by the author. I stumbled into one and became a fan! A great summer read! Gilead, Marilynne Robinson (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004)

Gilead is currently on my nightstand. This novel begins as an historical, generational memoir of Reverend John Ames, son and grandson of preachers. John Ames lives in the twilight of life. Seventy-six-years-old with a failing heart, his days are coming to a close. So, in a daily journal in 1956, Ames writes a long letter he hopes his six-year-old son will read when he is grown. I am finding the journey a rich one, especially because of the loss of my Dad five months ago and my love for "old family albums with black and white snapshots, each with its own story to tell". These books are available from a variety of sources: The St. Luke's Book Table, Amazon.com, Cokesbury.com, or your favorite bookstore.

July 2005

Home Improvements 2005 Summer Schedule

Home Improvements is open to couples for fellowship, support and discussion on varied topics relating to family, parenting, enhancing relationships and exploring our faith journeys. We do missional work both within the church and the communities.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 H.R. Concert: The Fab 4 (Beatlemania)	8	9
10	11 Zoo trip	12	13 H.R. Ice Cream Social at Red- stone Park	14 H.R. Concert: Kool Cats (Rock-n-Roll)	15	16
17	18	19	20 Coyote Ridge park, 6:00pm	21 H.R. Concert: The Steve Thomas Band (80's Rock)	22 St. Luke's Family Camp	23
24 St. Luke's Family Camp	25	26	27	28 H.R. Concert: The Nacho Men	29	30
31		August 3rd Paintbrush Park, 6:00pm	August 17th Dad Clark park, 6:00pm	August 31st Park – Speedy's choice		