

CHPC Reading and Reflection Book Group Schedule

September 2018 - August 2019

We meet at 6:45 pm in the church Narthex

Our thanks to Rev. Dr. Eugenia Gamble for these encouragements to read with the eyes of faith!

All of life is shot through with the presence and tenderness of God. Each human life, whether intentionally or not, unfolds around the great Biblical themes of creation, love, sin, redemption & calling.

- New things happen (creation).
- Love blossoms, changes, is sought, is lost, is recovered, is given unexpectedly (grace)
- Selfishness, prejudice, fear and violence seem to rule decisions (sin).
- In the midst of the worst imaginable people are given fresh, albeit sometimes chastened, new and unearned starts (redemption).

People seek and discover their true identity and purpose in the world—where their greatest joy meets the world's deepest need (calling).

One way to read a book for its spiritual support is to look for those great themes.

The following questions might be helpful.

- Where in this book can I see something creative and nourishing?
- Where in this book do I see astonishing graciousness, forbearance, love or loveliness?
- What is the brokenness or fear that underlies the actions of the characters or the motives of the writers?
- What are the characteristics of the characters or writers that are somehow common to all of humanity?
- How are the characters like me? Unlike me?
- How do the characters behave in a Christ like way?
How do they fall short?

In what way might I see love and grace leading me to this book?

September 25 - *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore* by Robin Sloan (Fiction): A gleeful and exhilarating tale of global conspiracy, complex code breaking, high tech data visualization, young love, rollicking adventure, and the secret to eternal life. Set mostly in a hole-in-the wall San Francisco bookstore.

October 16 - *The Hare with Amber Eyes: a Family's Century of Loss and Art* by Edmund De Waal (Biography): Traces the parallel stories of nineteenth-century art patron Charles Ephrussi and his unique collection of 360 miniature netsuke Japanese ivory carvings, documenting Ephrussi's relationship with Marcel Proust and the impact of the Holocaust on his cosmopolitan family.

November 20 - *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James Loewen (Civilization, History): This book's awards include an American Book Award and the Oliver Cromwell Cox Award for Distinguished Anti-Racist Scholarship. Starting out as a survey of leading American history textbooks, it became what the San Francisco Chronicle calls "an extremely convincing plea for truth in education." Loewen brings history alive in all its complexity and ambiguity, with this retelling of how American history should and could be taught.

December 11 - *Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson (Young Adult Fiction): From Multnomah County Library's Black Pacific Northwest Collection, a story about a young woman who believes she must leave her poor neighborhood in order to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. Feeling like an outsider, she is tired of being treated as though she is someone to fix, that her Black mentor doesn't understand where she's coming from. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.



January 22 - *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith (Novel): It's New Year's morning, 1975. Archie Jones has decided to call it quits. Working class, ordinary with a failed marriage under his belt, he sits in his station wagon on a London road. The owner of a nearby halal butcher shop comes out to bang on the window, annoyed that the car is blocking his delivery area. This sets in motion this richly imagined, uproariously funny novel. It follows the racial, political, and social upheaval of the last half-century in post-war London. Two families, the Joneses and the Iqbals, both outsiders from within the former British empire, try to make their way in modern England.

February 19 - Multnomah County Library everybody Reads Selection! *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Novel, 2019 Multnomah Country Library Everybody Reads selection): Ifemelu leaves her childhood sweetheart and a troubled Nigeria to attend university in the United States. Despite her success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black in America. Navigating the tensions of culture and race, she becomes homesick for Nigeria and her first love, *Americanah* offers a frank assessment of how our societies both strengthen and fail us as we search for meaning. MCL also offers a 50-page book for ER, aimed at high school students, ***We Should All Be Feminists***, taken from a TED talk. Drawing on her own experiences and understanding of the often-masked realities of sexual politics, she explores what it means to be a woman.

You may wish to read both or view the talk at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc.

March 19 (or February 19) - *The Intuitionist* by Colson Whitehead (Mystery/African-American Detectives): An elevator inspector becomes the center of controversy when an elevator crashes. Lila Mae Watson is a black woman who inspects by intuition as opposed to visual observation, and now she must prove her method was not at fault. This fiction debut is a study of society's attitude toward technology.

April 16 - *Coming to My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook* by Alice Waters (Memoir): Over 40 years ago, Alice Waters opened the doors of Chez Panisse, the 'little French restaurant' in Berkeley, California that was at the leading edge of the American culinary revolution. Recalling the people, places, times, and meals that have touched her life, she paints an indelible portrait of the young woman from suburban New Jersey whose formative sojourn in Europe ultimately led her to the epicenter of Northern California's burgeoning counterculture in the late 1960s.

May 21 - *The Soul of America: the Battle for Our Better Angels* by Jon Meacham - (History, Civilization, Social Movements): Meacham helps us understand the present moment in American politics and life by looking back at critical times in our history when hope overcame division and fear. With clarity and purpose, Meacham explores contentious periods and how presidents and citizens came together to defeat the forces of anger, intolerance, and extremism. Our current climate of partisan fury is not new. What Abraham Lincoln called 'the better angels of our nature' have repeatedly found a way to prevail.

June 18 - *Chicago* by Brian Doyle (Novel): A love letter to Chicago, the Great American City and a wry account of a young man's coming-of-age that will plunge you into a city you will never forget. Some years ago a young college graduate moves to Chicago and rents a small apartment on the north side of the city by the vast and muscular lake. Living there for 5 seasons, he meets gangsters, gamblers, policemen, a brave and garrulous bus driver, a cricket player, a librettist, his first girlfriend, a shy apartment manager, and many other riveting souls, not to mention a wise and personable dog of indeterminate breed.

July 16 - *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr (Historical Fiction): 2015 Pulitzer Prize winning 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 lives with her father in Paris. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris, so they flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo. In a mining town in Germany, the orphan Werner grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find. Interweaving their lives, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

August 20 - *Mrs. Sherlock Holmes: The True Story of New York City's Greatest Female Detective and the 1917 Missing Girl Case That Captivated a Nation* by Brad Rica (True Crime): A mysterious woman in black, Grace Humiston, vows to find 18 year old Ruth Cruger who disappeared on February 12, 1917. The police had given up. The press nicknamed Humiston after fiction's greatest detective. She turned her back on society life to fight crime during an era when women were rarely involved with investigations. She was appointed the first female U.S. district attorney in history and the first female consulting detective to the New York Police Department.