



The Pastor's Bookshelf

Looking for a good book? You've come to the right place! Peruse books read and summarized by our pastor, Kathryn Henry.

The Jesus Priorities: 8 Essential Habits by Christopher Maricle

From the back cover: —In response to his own faith crisis, Christopher Maricle began analyzing what Jesus said and did according to the Gospels. His findings point toward a way of transforming your life in the midst of living it...

The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible by A.J. Jacobs

A funny yet spiritually insightful experiment in the relevance of faith and religion in our modern world.

Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

The story of how Mortenson made more than good on his promise to build a school for girls in Pakistan, right in the backyard of the Taliban.

Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secrets of a Man's Soul by John Eldredge

Eldredge addresses a question for our times: What is the essence of a Christian man?

How Strong Women Pray by Bonnie St. John

A compendium of essays revealing how prayer helps to meet challenges, make decisions, maintain balance and focus and deepen relationships.

What You Do Best in the Body of Christ: Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, Personal Style and God-given Passion by Bruce Bugbee

The author writes: I believe that God has been changing the hearts of his people. The Holy Spirit is moving throughout the church, crossing denominational lines and geographic boundaries, energizing a worldwide wave with little respect for human contrived theological or doctrinal differences. Bugbee's work helps the reader figure out how he or she fits most effectively in God's plan for the church and the world. It is a book to do, not just to read.

Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith by Henri Nouwen

A compendium of Nouwen's works edited from his lectures, essays, sermons and other writings by Drew Seminary professors Rebecca Laird and Michael Christensen.

The Future of Faith by Harvey Cox

Cox holds that there is an essential change taking place in what it means to be religious - a movement away from dogmatic belief systems toward an Age of the Spirit.

***The Great Awakening: Reviving Faith and Politics in a Post-religious Right America* by Jim Wallis**

Wallis writes to explore the prospects for a revival of faith that changes politics, particularly in the areas of social justice and good stewardship of the environment.

***The New Christians* by Tony Jones**

Jones offers a new way of being faithfully Christian – a middle way between religious conservatism and religious liberalism.

Talking to God

Kristin Murphy donated this book, which belonged to her mother, in memory of Oz. Look for it on the table outside the Pastor's office.

***Christ and Culture* by H. Richard Niebuhr**

Written over 50 years ago, Niebuhr's classic work still speaks to the question of how Christ is relevant to the cultural climates and situations in which the Christian lives day by day.

***Money and Faith: The Search for Enough* edited and compiled by Michael Schut**

A series of essays that prompts us to explore our relationship with money. The readings are especially interesting in these hard times when funds seem to be evaporating before our very eyes and we begin to wonder how we can do well without so much.

***The Spiritual Life of Children* by Robert Coles**

Jesus said, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." Children are very close to God. Their insight into the divine is honest and profound.

***When God Disappears* by Shane Stanford**

Stanford calls upon stories Jesus told to help the reader find hope when circumstances seem impossible – when the storm does not pass and the pain does not stop.

***The Shack* by William P. Young**

An absorbing work of fiction that deals imaginatively with the concepts of the Trinity, suffering, death and resurrection.

***The Shaping of a Life* by Phyllis Tickle**

A donation from the library of member Judith Anderson, who was united with Christ on December 25, 2007. An accomplished spiritual writer, Phyllis Tickle recounts how a busy outer life, upon reflection, reveals an inner life of prayer, transformation and profound spiritual growth.

***Being Disciples of Jesus in a Dot.Com World, A Theological Survival Guide for Youth, Adults and Other Confused Christians* by Ted V. Foote and P. Alex Thornburg**

A conversational writing style, but not a light-hearted study.

***The Everything Green Living Book* by Diane Gow McDilda**

Transform your lifestyle – easy ways to conserve energy, protect your family's health, and help save the environment. Read this as a follow up to our dinner discussion last month with Rev. Fletcher Harper of GreenFaith, New Jersey's interfaith coalition for the environment. Environmental stewardship is a theological matter as well as a concern of social and moral responsibility. We should each be doing our part as individuals and as a church community. (*Available through the public library.*)

***Get Real: a Spiritual Journey for Men* by Derek Maul**

Every man has the potential for a deeper spiritual life. Maul speaks with honest directness about faith, family and the desire for God and how in the twenty-first century a man can have the courage to take Jesus up on the invitation to follow him.

***I was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality* by Arthur Sutherland**

Sutherland places before us our fear of meeting the “other” and the “stranger” in an increasingly global, and frequently dangerous, village. Christian theology compels us to practice hospitality. Can we respond to this divine appeal?

***Simple Truths: On Values, Civility, and Our Common Good* by Stephen Bauman, adapted from his popular radio commentary**

In a minute, a small surprise, something unexpected, a simple truth will catch you in an off-guard moment and raise your thoughts to a life deep with meaning..

***Christ the Lord – Out of Egypt* a novel by Anne Rice**

A reverent imagining of the hidden years of the child Jesus as told from Jesus’ own viewpoint.

***Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* by David L. Weaver-Zercher**

The remarkable story of the Amish response to the horrific shooting of ten schoolgirls in October, 2006.

***Mother Teresa – Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the “Saint of Calcutta”* Edited and with commentary by Brian Kolodiejchak**

A chronicle of the inner spiritual journey of the woman known world-wide for her compassion and service to the poorest of the poor.

***Storm from the East: The Struggle Between the Arab World and the Christian West* by Milton Viorst**

A short tightly written summary of the most complex and dangerous areas in today’s world.

***Giving Faith a Second Chance* by Rev. Christopher Wolf**

Chris Wolf was a member of the Delaware-Raritan Classis until 2005, when he left the Lebanon Reformed Church to serve the First Reformed Church in Grandville, MI. In this new book, Chris reflects on his time in New Jersey addressing questions such as, “How do you talk to people who have “tried” church and decided it is not for them? What do you say to people who think faith can’t deal with the real issues in life?”

***Speaking of Faith* by Krista Tippett**

The host of public radio’s “Speaking of Faith” listens with care to voices from the world’s religious traditions as they speak about the mysteries of life.

***Life Together: the Classic Exploration of Faith in Community* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

Martyred by the Gestapo near the end of World War II for plotting to assassinate Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer left a legacy of writings that has become a prized testimony of faith and courage for Christians around the world. *Life Together* is Bonhoeffer’s inspiring account of a unique fellowship in an underground seminary during the Nazi years in Germany. It reads like one of Paul’s letters, giving practical advice on how life together in Christ can be sustained in families and groups. The role of personal prayer, worship in common, everyday work, and Christian service is treated in simple, almost biblical, words. *Life Together* is bread for all who are hungry for the real life of Christian fellowship.

***The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus’ Final Week in Jerusalem* by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan**

Using the gospel of Mark as their guide, Borg and Crossan aim to present a careful and insightful account of Jesus’ last week of life. The historical Jesus invites us to follow him.

***A Geography of God: Exploring the Christian Journey* by Michael L. Lindvall**

Good complementary reading for your Lenten journey.

***Historic Churches of Somerset County* by Frank L. Greenagel**

No heavy reading this month, just a delightful volume of local history and photographs. You can see, by the many pictures of Reformed churches, what a prominent place the Dutch Reformed Church held in the history of this area. The book is available in my office.

***Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk* by Henri Nouwen with Michael Christensen and Rebecca Laird**

Henri Nouwen, beloved author, priest, and world-famous spiritual counselor and guide, served as spiritual director to many men and women, but his course on spiritual direction was never recorded during his lifetime. Now, in *Spiritual Direction*, two of Nouwen's students present his wonderful and wise advice on how to live a deep spiritual life in communion with others.

***The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew – Three Women Search for Understanding* by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner**

It began as a project for their children – writing a picture book together to help them understand their three faiths. But it ended as a faith experience for themselves and for us. In a final chapter, they provide detailed advice on how to start a faith club: the question to ask, the books to read, and most important, the open-minded attitude to maintain.

***The Language of God: a Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* by Francis S. Collins**

Dr. Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, explains his own journey from atheism to faith and then takes readers on a stunning tour of modern science to show that physics, chemistry and biology all fit together in God's plan.

***Letters to Malcom Chiefly on Prayer: Reflections on the Intimate Dialogue Between Man and God* by C.S. Lewis**

Lewis addresses many practicalities of prayer – when and where to pray, must prayer be formal and which of our many selves we show to God while praying. Beautifully done.

***Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* by N.T. Wright**

We crave justice, beauty, spirituality and relationship but these are hard to come by in today's world. How might things be made right? Simply put: through Christianity. Wright's work is thoughtful, accessible and transforming.

***A Tiny Step Away From Deepest Faith: A Teenager's Search for Meaning* by Marjorie Corbman**

This astonishing book is the spiritual memoir of a 17-year-old. Marjorie Corbman was born and raised Jewish, became an atheist, pagan, a Wiccan; then, as she tells it, "I simply met Christ and had to submit."

***Becoming a Blessed Church: Forming a Church of Spiritual Purpose, Presence, and Power* by N. Graham Standish**

This book follows the story of one small congregation as its members discover that by being open to God in everything they do, blessings flow in ways they never before experienced or expected.

***The Gospel of Judas* edited by Rudolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer and Gregor Wurst**

"The secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot." This discovery has been called "astonishing", "astounding". See also the article in the May, 2006 [National Geographic](#).

***The Soul of Christianity* by Huston Smith**

"I have tried [in this book] to describe a Christianity which is fully compatible with everything we now know, and to indicate why Christians feel privileged to give their lives to it."

***Prayer is a Place* by Phyllis Tickle**

As the founding editor of the religion department of *Publishers Weekly*, Phyllis Tickle was a key figure in bringing discussions about religion into the nation's cultural and intellectual mainstream. This book is her insightful first-person account of the people she has met and the trends she has observed over twelve crucial years of change in American religion.

***Where God Was Born: A Journey by Land to the Roots of Religion* by Bruce Feiler**

Feiler discovers that at the birth of Western religion, all faiths drew from one another and were open to co-existence. Does the Bible argue for Interfaith harmony?

***Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer**

"Ask me whether what I have done is my life". With this provocation, Quaker writer and teacher Parker Palmer begins an insightful and moving meditation on finding one's true calling. Palmer shares insights gained from darkness and depression as well as fulfillment and joy as he seeks to illuminate the pathway toward vocation.

***Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson**

This novel has been called a "hymn of praise and lamentation to God-haunted existence." In the form of a letter from an aging and dying father to his very young son, *Gilead*, is a reflection on father-son relationships, prayer, freedom and forgiveness.

***Whose Bible Is It? A History of the Scriptures Through the Ages* by Jaroslav Pelikan**

This superbly written account by a noted theological historian traces how the Bible evolved from its earliest form as oral tradition to its modern existence in a multitude of languages and translations. Readable and fascinating.

***Be Strong and Courageous: Letters to My Children About Being Christian* by David Yount**

Yount writes in conversational letter style to his three young adult daughters to strengthen and encourage them in the faith. "I write to you, my children, at the turn of the millennium, the significance of which rests wholly on the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth two thousand years ago. The faith you share with one-third of the world's population is founded on Good News as fresh and relevant as it was when Jesus delivered it from the hills of Galilee."

***Hospitality: Life in a Time of Fear* by Steve Clapp and Fred Bernhard**

Since 9/11, we have been living in a time of increased fear and suspicion. But the response to fear need not be a turning inward but rather a turning outward. Learning to recognize the presence of Christ in others can have a liberating impact on all we do. Clapp and Bernhard explore the spiritual basis of this kind of hospitality.

***Congregation: The Journey Back to Church* by Gary Dorsey**

It's often interesting to peruse the shelves of the public library for new acquisitions in the religion section. Here's a good selection. Dorsey spent a year with an historic, "tall-steeple" Congregationalist church in Windsor, Connecticut and managed to capture the spiritual interconnectedness of the people, the pastors and the mission of this extraordinary, "ordinary" congregation.

***Truth and Fiction in the DaVinci Code* by Bart D. Ehrman**

Many people are still fascinated by the religious suggestions and assertions in the best-selling *The DaVinci Code*. This book by historian Bart D. Ehrman looks at the beginnings of Christianity in an attempt to sort fact from fantasy in the lives of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Constantine.

Protestant Spiritual Exercises by Joseph D. Driskill

Spirituality has traditionally been seen as the domain of the Catholic faith, but a rich spiritual heritage derives also from Calvin, Luther and other Reformers. Driskill examines the history, theology and practice of Protestant spirituality. Actual practices for individuals and small groups are included.

When Jesus Came to Harvard: Making Moral Choices Today by Harvey Cox

"...we live in a world of competing and conflicting codes of behavior. The traditional ethical signposts are not as clear as they once were; nevertheless, there is still a persistent belief that knowing more about Jesus might help..."