

FIRST TUESDAY BOOK GROUP 2019-2020 READING LIST

The First Tuesday Book Group meets at [Southminster Presbyterian Church](#) on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. [You can also join our group on Goodreads.com.](#)



July 2, 2019: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama

Becoming is the memoir of former United States First Lady Michelle Obama published in 2018. Described by the author as a deeply personal experience, the book talks about her roots and how she found her voice, as well as her time in the White House, her public health campaign, and her role as a mother.

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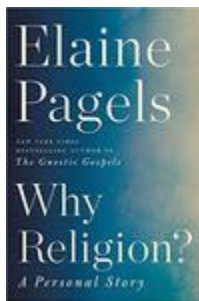


August 6, 2019: *Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power* by Rachel Maddow

In her hard-hitting debut, popular MSNBC host Maddow examines how the country has lost control of its national-security policy. Written with bracing wit and intelligence, Rachel Maddow's *Drift* argues that we've drifted away from America's original ideals and become a nation weirdly at peace with perpetual war. Sensible yet provocative, dead serious yet seriously funny, *Drift* will reinvigorate a "loud and jangly" political debate about our vast and confounding national security state.

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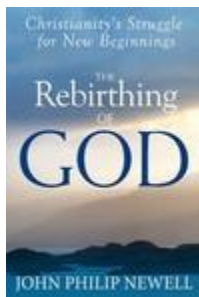


September 3, 2019: *Why Religion? A Personal Story* by Elaine Pagels

Each summer the Adult Education program suggests a book for the entire congregation to read. In the early fall, we devote a worship service to discussing the book as a congregation. This summer, Southminster will be reading the book, *Why Religion, A Personal Story* by Elaine Pagels. *Why Religion?* Is a deeply moving exploration of progressive religious beliefs and human experience that many of us will be able to relate to.

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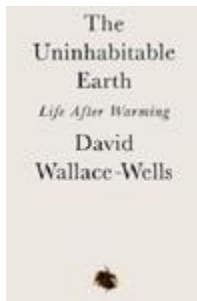


October 1, 2019: *The Rebirthing of God* by John Philip Newell

Dare to imagine a new birth from deep within Christianity. In the midst of dramatic changes in Western Christianity, internationally respected spiritual leader, peacemaker and scholar John Philip Newell offers the hope of a fresh stirring of the Spirit among us. He invites us to be part of a new holy birth of sacred living. Speaking directly to the heart of Christians—those within the well-defined bounds of Christian practice and those on the disenchanting edges—as well as to the faithful and seekers of other traditions, he explores eight major features of a new birthing of Christianity.

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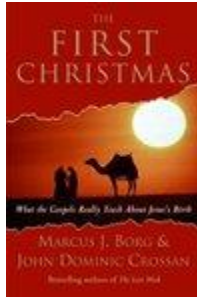


November 5, 2019: *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* by David Wallace-Wells

"The Uninhabitable Earth" wagers that we've grown inured to cool recitations of the facts, and require a more direct engagement of political will. "There is no single way to best tell the story of climate change, no single rhetorical approach likely to work on a given audience, and none too dangerous to try," Wallace-Wells writes. "Any story that sticks is a good one."

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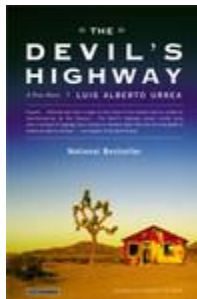


December 3, 2019: *The First Christmas* by John Dominic Crossan

In *The First Christmas*, two of today's top Jesus scholars, Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, join forces to show how history has biased our reading of the nativity story as it appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. As they did for Easter in their previous book, *The Last Week*, here they explore the beginning of the life of Christ, peeling away the sentimentalism that has built up over the last two thousand years around this most well-known of all stories to reveal the truth of what the gospels actually say. Borg and Crossan help us to see this well-known narrative afresh by answering the question, "What do these stories mean?" in the context of both the first century and the twenty-first century. They successfully show that the Christmas story, read in its original context, is far richer and more challenging than people imagine.

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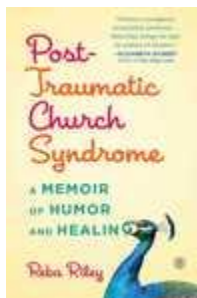


January 7, 2020: *The Devil's Highway: A True Story* by Luis Alberto Urrea

From the Pulitzer Prize finalist, "the single most compelling, lucid, and lyrical contemporary account of the absurdity of U.S. border policy" (The Atlantic). In May 2001, a group of men attempted to cross the Mexican border into the desert of southern Arizona, through the deadliest region of the continent, the "Devil's Highway." Three years later, Luis Alberto Urrea wrote about what happened to them. The result was a national bestseller, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a "book of the year" in multiple newspapers, and a work proclaimed as a modern American classic.

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February 4, 2020: *Post-Traumatic Church Syndrome* by Reba Riley

Post-Traumatic Church Syndrome takes you by the hand and reminds you that sometimes you first have to be lost in order to be found. Written with humor and personality, this debut memoir recounts a woman's spiritual quest of experiencing thirty religions before her thirtieth birthday.

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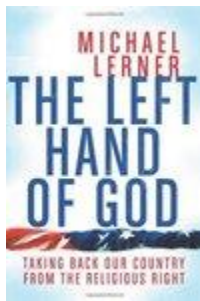
March 3, 2020: *The Moment of Lift* by Melinda Gates

Gates's unforgettable narrative is backed by startling data as she presents the issues that most need our attention—from child marriage to lack of access to contraceptives to gender inequity in the workplace. And, for the first time, she writes about her personal life and the road to equality in her own marriage. Throughout, she shows how there has never been more opportunity to change the world—and ourselves.

Writing with emotion, candor, and grace, she introduces us to remarkable women and shows the power of connecting with one another. When we lift others up, they lift us up, too.

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April 7, 2020: *The Left Hand of God* by Michael Lerner

“The unholy alliance of the Political Right and the Religious Right threatens to destroy the America we love. It also threatens to generate a revulsion against God and religion by identifying them with militarism, ecological irresponsibility, fundamentalist antagonism to science and rational thought, and insensitivity to the needs of the poor and the powerless.” Lerner proposes a Spiritual Covenant with America that emphasizes a caring and nurturing society focused not merely on social responsibility but on human connectedness. He argues that in order for progressive politics to survive in America, liberals must develop a respect for progressive forms of religion that provide inspiration and a sense of "meaning" in people's lives.

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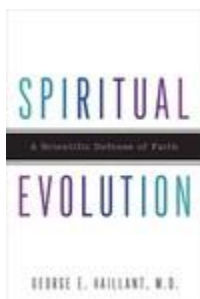


May 5, 2020: *History Teaches Us to Resist* by Mary Frances Berry

History Teaches Us to Resist is an essential book for our times which attests to the power of resistance. It proves to us through myriad historical examples that protest is an essential ingredient of politics, and that progressive movements can and will flourish, even in perilous times.

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June 2, 2020: *Spiritual Evolution* by George Vaillant

In *Spiritual Evolution*, Vaillant lays out a brilliant defense not of organized religion but of man's inherent spirituality. Our spirituality, he shows, resides in our uniquely human brain design and in our innate capacity for emotions like love, hope, joy, forgiveness, and compassion, which are selected for by evolution and located in a different part of the brain than dogmatic religious belief. Evolution has made us spiritual creatures over time, he argues, and we are destined to become even more so. *Spiritual Evolution* makes the scientific case for spirituality as a positive force in human evolution, and predicts for our species an even more loving future.

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