

# Ellie's Book Picks

People often ask me for book suggestions. I try to offer titles when I quote good books in sermons. But here is the best of my summer reading, for those who might like books for your Fall.

**'Putting Away Childish Things: A Tale of Modern Faith'** by Marcus Borg

Our favourite progressive theologian has written a novel. His engaging characters struggle with the social divides of today's Christianities. Read this book and give it to someone who enjoys a good story and might not otherwise read 'God stuff.'

**'Breakfast With Buddha'** by Roland Merullo

This novel isn't just about Buddhism. It's a very funny story about two men on a road trip across the U.S. during which the Protestant religious sceptic eventually tries meditation. You'll learn and you'll laugh as you read this book.

**'Made for Goodness and Why this Makes a Difference'** by Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu

This inspiring book by South Africa's beacon of hope and his Anglican priest daughter weaves their parenting and grandparenting experiences into world wide reflections on this question: "Why are you so sure goodness will triumph over evil in the end?" Each chapter ends with a beautiful prayer/psalm. (We'll be sharing some of them in worship at Trinity this season.)

**'Committed: A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage'** by Elizabeth Gilbert

The author of *Eat, Pray, Love* brings her researcher's curiosity, spirituality and humour to the subject of marriage. A non-fiction book of interest to anyone who is married or contemplating a covenant. Maybe read it together?

**'Evoking Change: Make a Difference in Your Life and the World'** by Anna S. Christie

Written by a B.C. Minister and Therapist, this book connects our personal spiritual growth journeys with our ability to lead families, organizations and our world toward positive change.

**'Sweat Your Prayers: The Five Rhythms of the Soul'** by Gabrielle Roth

This is an old book (1997) about movement as a spiritual practice, but new to me since I took up

her practise last summer. You can read the book, and/or come **try it out at Trinity on Thursday October 7<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm.**

**'Darwin, Divinity and the Dance of the Cosmos: An Ecological Christianity'** by Bruce Sanguin  
This is an intriguing exploration of the science of the universe and inspiration to change our consciousness about the role of Church in developing 'a spirituality of awe.' **It's our Fall Supper and Book Study at Trinity, starting Monday October 18th.**

**'Imperfect Birds'** by Anne Lamott

Lamott's Christian spirituality permeates this novel, as all of her fine and funny writings. This is a remarkably true-to-life story about a family living through a scary teenage time. Dare to get inside a teenage girl's mind? And her mother's? Want to know what I've been through - cause hopefully it never happens to you?

**Paradoxology: Spirituality in a Quantum Universe** by Miriam Therese Winter

If you are interested in where science and spirituality intersect, but the quantum physics seems too complicated, enjoy this poetic, personal exploration of the subatomic, spiritual dance of life. From the Medical Mission Sister who once gave us "Joy Is Like the Rain".

**An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith** by Barbara Brown Taylor

A personal exploration of faith practises in her everyday life, written by one of the top ten preachers in North America. What a talented writer, and what a helpful, inspiring book! My summer '09 favourite.

**The Emerging Christian Way: Thoughts, Stories and Wisdom for a Faith of Transformation** Edited by Michael Schwartzentruber

This was our Fall '09 Book Study book. It's like an easy 'reader' with different writers introducing the new theology, values and practises of the 21<sup>st</sup> century 'emerging' kind of Christian church we are. Chapters by Tom Harper, Anne Squire, Thomas Berry, Bill Phipps.

**A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story** by Diana Butler Bass

Tired of carrying the Christian story as a litany of crusades, holocaust, witch burnings, patriarchy and fundamentalism? This smart, mainstream protestant academic has written about the real peoples' love stories of each era of Christian history. Very engaging.

**The Book of Negroes** and **Any Known Blood**

Both these well-researched novels by CBC Radio's 2009 Canada Reads Winner, Lawrence Hill, are truly gripping. One introduced me to some hard history of slavery in Nova Scotia, but I couldn't put it down. The other is a five generations journey based on Hill's 'black and white'

family history in Oakville. Maybe read it aloud to each other at your house, like we did? You'll spend many more hours together!

**Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow**

This was my 'most quoted book' last winter, because it is full of what we call 'resurrection stories' in people's lives. My summer retreat at the Omega Institute was led by the author, Elizabeth Lesser. She is a lovely human and wise woman, and I enjoyed her leadership as much as I continue to enjoy this book. Trinity Council heard the Chapter "Bozos On The Bus".

**Take This Bread: The Spiritual Memoir of a Twenty-First-Century Christian** by Sara Miles

The personal story of an atheist, lesbian, journalist and activist who came back to church, had a conversion experience during Communion and then 'shared the bread' by starting foodbanks in San Francisco churches. Lots of humour, wisdom and inspiration here.

**Anti-Cancer: A New Way of Life** by David Servan-Schreiber, M.D., PhD

This international bestseller by a renowned doctor who has had brain cancer twice, is one of the most useful books I've read in a while. Cancer touches us in our church community too often. Are we willing to look at the changes we CAN make in our lifestyles and our world, to heal the epidemic? As we read this book together, we are already shopping and eating differently.