

Ellie's Book Picks

Fall '09

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.

Paradoxology: Spirituality in a Quantum Universe. 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. 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 favourite.

The Emerging Christian Way: Thoughts, Stories and Wisdom for a Faith of Transformation. Ed. Michael Schwartzentruber. This is our Fall Book Study book. Get a copy and read along. Its like an easy 'reader' with different writers introducing the new theology, values and practises of the 21st 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. 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" in September.

Take This Bread: The Spiritual Memoir of a twenty-first-century Christian. 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. 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.