

# ***Spiritual Growth through 2024***

***Highlighted titles are Bonus Books and Count for Two Books***

2019 \*\*\* Children

## ***All Around Us***

Xelena Gonzalez

Grandpa says circles are all around us. He points to the rainbow that rises high in the sky after a thundercloud has come. "Can you see? That's only half of the circle. That rest of it is down below, in the earth." He and his granddaughter meditate on gardens and seeds, on circles seen and unseen, inside and outside us, on where our bodies come from and where they return to. They share and create family traditions in this stunning exploration of the cycles of life and nature.

2019

## ***Be Still: Departure from Collective Madness***

Gordon C. Stewart

*Be Still: Departure from Collective Madness* echoes the call of the Navajo sage and the psalmist who invited their hearers to stop--"If we keep going this way, we're going to get where we're going"--and be still--"Be still, and know. . . ." Like pictures in a photo album taken from a unique lens, these essays zoom in on singular moments of time where the world is making headlines, drawing attention to the sin of exceptionalism in its national, racial, religious, cultural, and species manifestations. Informed by Japanese Christian theologian Kosuke Koyama, Elie Wiesel, Wendell Berry, and others, the author invites the reader to slow down, be still, and depart from "collective madness" before the Navajo sage is right. Told in the voice familiar to listeners of *All Things Considered* and Minnesota Public Radio, these poetic essays sometimes feel as familiar as an old family photo album, but the pictures themselves are taken from a thought-provoking angle.

2019

## ***Lessons to Nourish the Soul***

Rev. Marjorie Eva Palmer

The sermons found in this volume, Favorites edition of the *Lessons to Nourish the Soul* series, are my personal favorite sermons that I wrote and presented as a United Methodist pastor.

These sermons began initially as lectionary items that I hoped would be challenging and might yield some good thoughts for my community. I am particularly interested in helping people come to faith, grow in faith, and understand their faith, using it as a foundation for their living.

Like the King's servants who were sent to offer invitations to the wedding banquet for any who would hear and accept, these sermons offer that invitation: the invitation to come unto Him and become part of God's Kingdom.

2019

*Spoken into Being: Divine Encounters through Story*

Michael Williams, Sr.

"Tell me a story." Countless parents and grandparents have heard that request from children. People of all ages are captivated by a good story.

Storytelling helps us makes sense of the events of our lives, the world around us, and God. When we tell stories, we speak a world into being—just as God did in the creation accounts in the book of Genesis.

In this book on storytelling as spiritual exploration, master storyteller Michael Williams shares stories from his life, guides us to reflect on our lives, and helps us tell our stories. He reminds us that we have been spoken into being as part of a much larger story. Using poetry, personal narrative, and retellings of biblical stories, Williams leads us to a deeper knowledge of the power of narrative.

The stories that capture our attention shape us into who we are now and the persons we will become. Not all stories serve us well, however. Stories of fear stop us in our tracks and become roadblocks on the journey, while stories of fantasy, no matter how alluring, are dead-end streets.

*Spoken into Being* points to a path beyond fear and fantasy, a way toward encounters with the Holy where all things are being made new.

2019

*The Soulmaking Room*

Dee Dee Risher

In this personal story, Dee Dee Risher weaves experiences from her life with the biblical story of the prophet Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Risher is captivated by this spiritually attuned, generous, hospitable, honest, and bold woman. The woman from Shunem extends radical hospitality to the prophet, expecting no reward. But when disaster strikes, she does not hesitate to hold Elisha accountable or talk back.

"Every human being goes through so much," Risher reflects, "and there is some heartbreakingly beautiful fruit we are to shape from that. That is our own unique, authentic gift to the world." Her book encourages each of us to find a holy room in which we are in community with others and where we can shape our souls into their unique dimensions. We each need a space for this work—a *Soulmaking Room*.

"If we cannot deal with failure, if we do not know how to put our deepest losses in our holy room, and if we do not know who our people are, we can never fully join the joy and power of God's story," Dee Dee Risher asserts. Embark with her on the adventure of creating and discovering the joys of *The Soulmaking Room*.

2019

*The Wesley Challenge: 21 Days to a More Authentic Faith*

Chris Folmsbee

How can we introduce younger lay people to the practical and accessible Wesley? In *The Wesley Challenge* Participant Book small groups or whole churches will spend three weeks working through 21 questions that will engage their physical, spiritual and emotional lives and their relationship with God and others.

With fast-paced emphasis on graphics and short content bits, the challenge will inspire us to a new kind of commitment—one that is more authentic, vulnerable and soul shaping resulting in thousands of people who have a renewed passion to discover deeper levels of commitment to God and others.

Additional components for a three-week study include a comprehensive leader guide and a DVD featuring author Chris Folmsbee, and a youth study guide.

2019

*What We Need is Here: Practicing the Heart of Christian Spirituality*

Roger Owens

For those searching for an authentic faith, Roger Owens shows that in Jesus, God has already given us all we need to live and flourish. He calls readers to return to basic Christian practices that build and sustain their relationship with God.

Owens explores 7 fundamentals of Christian spirituality: reading the Gospels, praying the Psalms, befriending silence, finding Jesus in church, meeting Jesus through Holy Communion, embodying our spirituality, and being with the poor. His book is a thoughtful, engaging treatment of practices essential to growth as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Ideal for individual or small-group study.

2019 \*\*\* Youth

*What's Your Story? Seeing Your Life Through God's Eyes*

Sarah Heath

Envision your life as an adventure co-created by God. This study explores Joseph's story. He accomplished great things in Egypt, but he didn't really understand his story's significance until he recognized what God was doing through him. Sarah Heath helps you explore your own life story in the same way. By doing so, you'll discover how to co-create with God the kind of life that will be a page-turner.

This four-session small-group study features opportunities and space for creative journaling, complemented by art from the author. A DVD and Leader Guide are available to spark further reflection and discussion for small groups.

2020

*40 Days with Wesley*

Rueben P. Job

This engaging daily devotional weaves quotes and excerpts from John Wesley, the father of Methodism, with inspirational readings on faith and prayer from Rueben P. Job, well-known leader in spiritual formation. Each selection offers a simple daily pattern of reflection with a prayer, Scripture, and short readings that make this daily devotional an easy read. You'll also find that this book makes a wonderful gift or award for anyone who needs reassurance and inspiration.

2020

*Easter Stories*

C.S. Lewis, Leo Tolstoy, Selma Lagerlof, et. al.

Everyone who believes Easter is about more than bunnies and eggs will be grateful for this new collection of short stories that shed light on the deeper meaning of the season. Selected for their spiritual value and literary quality, these classic tales capture the spirit of Easter in a way that will captivate readers of all ages. Parents and grandparents will find that children love to hear these stories read aloud, year after year.

2020

*God Unbound*

Elaine Heath

The apostle Paul led the Galatians through a massive cultural shift in which they had to radically expand their ideas of who God is, who they were, and God's mission for the church. He was able to lead them through this time of great change because of his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road, an experience in which his view of God was completely upended.

Today Christianity is undergoing a cultural shift just as challenging as the situation confronting Paul and the Galatians. As many churches decline, congregations and pastors feel uncertain and anxious about how to continue their mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Elaine Heath extends an invitation to broaden our view of God by moving beyond the walls of buildings and programs to become a more diverse church than we have ever imagined. While deeply honoring tradition, she calls the church to boldly follow the Holy Spirit's leadership into the future.

2020

*If I should Die Before I Live*

Richard R. Smyth

A disquieting question persists: “What if I should die before I feel life is full?” It is deeply personal, hauntingly spiritual. It’s a challenge to re-visit beliefs and the dynamics of faith, love, hope. Exploration brings a fresh encounter: the human and spiritual elements of “self.” These are not contending identities; each supplies unique initiatives for life’s fullness. Both need nurturing; either can be ignored. Spiritual experience makes promise and mystery real; this enhances earthly achievements.

These Meditations focus on spiritual vitality—especially for seniors. They reach beyond a biological birth-death time-frame. They touch on continuity beyond earth-time. God’s initiatives enrich the spiritual self—grace energizes faith. This generates and motivates people to offer acts of love. Love fosters grander character and perspective, wholesome relationships, healing for the heart-hungry/heart-broken. The outcome: a healthier self experiencing joy and peace—wholeness for life beyond death.

2020

*Raising World Changers in a Changing World*

Kristen Welch

Almost any parent you asked would tell you that they want their children to be happy, successful adults. But many of us forget (or never knew to begin with) that lasting personal joy is not necessarily found the way the world says it is--through reaching a certain socioeconomic status, having a certain job, buying a certain house, or having a certain amount in one's bank account. In fact, says Kristen Welch, popular blogger and author of *Raising Grateful Kids in an Entitled World*, personal satisfaction comes not from grabbing onto things but from holding them with an open hand and, very often, giving them away.

In this inspiring book, Welch shows parents how to discover for themselves and instill in their kids the profound joy that comes from sharing what we have been given--our time, our talents, and even what's in our wallets--with those who have less. Through powerful personal stories as well as stories from Scripture, Welch offers a tantalizing alternative to status quo parenting that has the power to impact not only our own families but the entire world. At the end of each chapter, one of the author's kids offers their perspective on what it's like to be raised as a world changer.

2020

*Resist and Persist: Faith and the Fight for Equality*

Erin Wathen

Named one of the Best Books of 2018 by *Publishers Weekly* (Religion)

Gold Winner for Religion for the 2018 Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards

Over the past few decades, the roles women play in public life have evolved significantly, as have the pressures that come with needing to do it all, have it all, and be all things to all people. And with this progress, misogyny has evolved as well. Today's discrimination is more subtle and indirect, expressed in double standards, micro aggressions, and impossible expectations. In other ways, sexism has gotten more brash and repulsive as women have gained power and voice in the mainstream culture.

Patriarchy is still sanctioned by every institution: capitalism, government, and even--maybe especially--the church itself. This is perhaps the ultimate irony--that a religion based on the radical justice and liberation of Jesus' teachings has been the most complicit part of the narrative against women's equality. If we are going to dial back the harmful rhetoric against women and their bodies, the community of faith is going to have to be a big part of the solution.

Erin Wathen navigates the complex layers of what it means to be a woman in our time and place--from the language we use to the clothes that we wear to the unseen and unspoken assumptions that challenge our full personhood at every turn. *Resist and Persist* reframes the challenges to women's equality in light of our current culture and political climate, providing a new language of resistance that can free women and men from the pernicious power of patriarchy.

2020

### *The Magnificent Story*

James Bryan Smith

We are story-making people. We love reading stories--and we love hearing the personal stories of others. We need stories, or narratives, to make sense of our world. And those stories shape our lives. What is the story you have been told about God? About the gospel? About the Christian life? About Jesus? About the cross? About yourself? About heaven?

Your answers to these questions will form a story that will determine how your life will go. The answers reveal your ability to trust, to love, to hope--and even your capacity for joy. Any story worth giving the power to shape our lives must pass a simple test: is it beautiful, good, and true? If it is, then it is a *Magnificent Story*--and that is where transformation takes place.

From James Bryan Smith, author of the bestselling book *Good and Beautiful God*, comes this spiritual formation resource meant to help both individuals and groups understand the *Magnificent Story* of Christ in their lives. Soon to be followed by *The Magnificent Journey: Living Deep in the Kingdom* (Fall 2018) and *The Magnificent Mission: Called and Sent by the Storyteller* (Fall 2019), the field-tested material within includes spiritual practices at the end of each chapter and a group discussion guide. Uncover the true story of beauty, goodness, and truth that will satisfy the ultimate longings of your heart.

2020

### *We Pray with Her*

Emily Peck-McClain, Danyelle Trexler, et.al.

As female leaders, our journeys are littered with obstacles and pitfalls unique to our gender. But we do not need to walk through life alone; we need to support and encourage our fellow women as we forge ahead in our work to leave a positive mark on the world. *We Pray with Her* is a collection of 100 inspiring devotionals written by the women who formed the grassroots movement of the same name. Whether

you're a woman leader or an aspiring leader looking for personal inspiration, in a supportive role to a leader, or a woman who wants to support her sisters in Christ, you'll find a home within these pages.

2020

*Working Class Rage: A Field Guide to White Anger and Pain*

Tex Sample

They are identified as the voting block that decided the 2016 presidential election: white, working-class people. Tex Sample, author of *Working Class Rage*, says that when we fail to look past the stereotypes of this demographic as unintelligent, self-destructive, and all things racist, we neglect to understand the nuances of this group, which means we, as pastors and church leaders, cannot be effective when communicating the Good News of Jesus. Sample provides a reliable and reader-friendly guide that drills deeper into the realities of a group of people who feel their suffering and anger has been denied, ignored, and misunderstood, and offers a way forward for partnerships that will enhance the lives of white (and black) working-class America.

2020

*Writings of John Wesley*

Keith Beasley-Topliffe

John Wesley was an eighteenth-century preacher, writer, and one of the founders of the Methodist movement. This book includes selections from Wesley's journals, sermons, and books, giving a clear picture not only of Wesley but also of the spiritual vitality that ignited a movement and continues to transform lives today.

More than ever, people want to grow spiritually. Many want to explore the rich spiritual writings of influential leaders in the history of Christianity. But trying to read classics written centuries ago can be daunting. The Upper Room Spiritual Classics are designed to help by offering readable translations in an accessible format.

Each book provides at least 14 excerpts that cover the range of the writer's spiritual concerns. An insightful, expertly written introduction helps readers understand the writer and his or her world. The Upper Room Spiritual Classics will help both individuals and groups grow in their faith by seeing God through the eyes of remarkable spiritual leaders.

2021

*Adamant: Finding Truth in a Universe of Opinions*

Lisa Bevere

By ancient definition, the adamant was known as both a diamond and a mythical stone of indestructible

wonder. In more modern terminology, it describes a posture of unshakeable resolve and determination. If there was ever a time for us to be adamant about love and truth it is now. God is Love. God is Truth. Both love and truth are timeless, transcending our current trends and opinions. Sometimes the most loving thing we will ever do is to speak the truth, but speaking truth begins with living it.

Using the mediums of Scripture and story, *New York Times* bestselling author Lisa Bevere takes readers on a journey into the Mountain of God, to the one place they can learn not only to abide in God's unshakeable truth and love, but become *adamant*--people who are unmovable, determined, and steadfast. With conviction and passion, Lisa unpacks the concept of the adamant for readers, linking together the grand story of Scripture and God's purpose in their lives. Readers will see that God's plan is revealed as we dwell in him; it is there that we are forged and shaped. As we abide in Christ our Cornerstone we are shaped into the image of the adamant.

2021

*Beyond Loneliness: The Gift of God's Friendship*

Trevor Hudson

Loneliness touches everyone, whether they are young or old, rich or poor. It can be one of the most painful experiences of life. There is a friend-shaped hole in all of our lives, Trevor Hudson writes. People long for relationship with others, but what may surprise them is that God actually longs to be friends with them. Having a close friendship with God is the only thing that will ultimately bring joy and happiness and ease the ache of loneliness. In *Beyond Loneliness*, Hudson provides guidance for building a friendship with God. Ten chapters help readers discover how to get to know God and deepen their friendship with God. Each chapter includes friendship exercises and reflection questions. Perfect for small-group or individual study.

2021

*Dinner by Candlelight: Comfort and Joy for Advent*

Kevin Louise Schaner

Christmas Is Coming! Feeling Anxious?

Expect Hope, Love, Joy and Peace this Advent.

Rekindle your anticipation of Christ's birth with comforting conversation.

"Schaner shares from her heart a collection of deeply engaging essays that provides not only food for thought during the pre-Christmas season, but also inspiration and hope for the future. This book is ideal for personal reflection, as well as a resource for prayer and discussion groups. I recommend it to anyone who anticipates that Christmas will be 'different' this year."

Dr. Charles Yoost

Pastor Emeritus, Church of the Saviour-UMC, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

"*Dinner by Candlelight* will encourage you to continue your Advent traditions while considering new ways to prepare for His birth. A beautiful thought-provoking read."



Debbie Vest

Retired Director of South Central Jurisdiction Volunteers in Mission  
United Methodist Church

"I recommend this book to anyone struggling to find 'that Christmas feeling' during a season of grief or loss, or simply wanting to deepen their sense of wonder and gratitude during Advent."

Christine Elliott, Ph.D.

Clinical Psychologist, LifeStream

"Kevin's sometimes bittersweet, more often heartwarming stories helped me to remember the quiet holiness of the season."

Rev. Barbara SilverSmith

Pastor, United Methodist Church

A retired librarian, Kevin is a writer and a speaker. She has traveled to five continents with Volunteer in Mission teams with the United Methodist Church; her articles about Ubuntu Journeys sponsored by United Methodist Women appear in Response magazine. Kevin lives in multicultural Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

2021

*Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home*

Traci Smith

A new and expanded version of *Seamless Faith*, now with more than a dozen new spiritual practices and additional resources for parents, kids, grandparents, and communities that care about families!

Add family faith moments to your daily routine with little or no prep, and share meaningful spiritual experiences with your children! Traci Smith, a pastor and mother of three, offers ways to discover and develop new spiritual practices as a family, whether you're a new seeker or a lifelong follower. *Faithful Families* is brimming with easy, do-it-yourself ideas for transforming your family's everyday moments into sacred moments!

*Faithful Families* helps you: connect faith to your family's everyday life; add family faith moments into your daily routine; learn new spiritual practices alongside your children; teach your children to appreciate religious diversity with time-tested non-Christian and Christian spiritual practices; respond to life's everyday challenges and opportunities with meaningful practices

*Faithful Families* is the perfect gift for Parents, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles; Baptisms; Baby Showers; New Families; Christian educators and those they serve; Preschool Classes; and Godparents

*Faithful Families* is part of The Young Clergy Women Project.

2021

*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*

Erin James-Brown

*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, the 2020 Spiritual Growth Study by staff of the Urban Village Church, uses the book of Proverbs and “The Serenity Prayer” as a guide to help Christians find their way through anxiety, worry, and fear and move towards God’s peace that surpasses all understanding. Using “The Serenity Prayer” as a scaffold, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* explores ways to discover peace through scriptural and spiritual disciplines so that we can be rooted in God and energized to live fully as disciples of Christ.

“The Serenity Prayer” shaped a 2015 four-part sermon series at the Urban Village Church in Chicago. It was through that series that the church was able to address the tumultuous events of that summer and present a framework for how to approach a God who desires peace for the hearts of God’s people in times of anxiety. These sermons are the basis for this book.

2021

### *One Day I Wrote Back: Interacting with Scripture Through Creative Writing*

Jane Herring

Throughout her life, Jane Herring struggled to hear what scripture had to say to her. She began wondering if the Bible was either too complicated a book to read in a meaningful way or too puzzling to actually mean anything at all. It was only when she started speaking back to scripture—putting pen to paper to write poetry, lists, stories, and letters—that Herring’s relationship with the Bible began to unfold.

Filled with down-to-earth stories, *One Day I Wrote Back* offers insight and perspective on scripture passages. Herring invites readers to use faith, reason, and imagination as they write in response to each week’s scripture.

\*\* Offers a way to become personally involved with scripture

\*\* Provides simple tools for beginning and experienced writers

\*\*Unique format that invites the reader to respond to Christianity and the Bible

2021

### *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship (Mission Study)*

Janet Wolf

*Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship*, by Janet Wolf, presents this well-known Gospel through voices and experiences that are often relegated to the margins. Where we stand, what we see, who we listen to, whose stories and voices we value or dismiss shape the way we understand the world and the Bible. This study incorporates the stories of those on the margins to uncover how the gospel is alive and well today—how God is, and always has been, calling us to live out the Word in a radical way.

The study begins in Mark 14 with the story of a woman who bursts into a gathering of male disciples to anoint Jesus, and, to the surprise of the disciples, is resoundingly affirmed. Throughout Wolf utilizes personal experiences and stories entrusted to her through her work in prisons and as a community

organizer to invite us to experience the power that stories have to heal, transform, liberate, and unshackle. And she engages us in scripture through a participatory Bible study process, which raises up voices and perspectives that are too often silenced or unheard. She pushes readers to ask: Good news for whom? Good news about what?

In five chapters, the study examines different passages in Mark and challenges readers to discover what radical discipleship looks like in their context. Each chapter ends with questions for personal reflection to help readers apply what they are learning in the study.

The Rev. Janet Wolf is an elder in The United Methodist Church and has served as a pastor of rural and urban congregations. In July 2012, she was appointed to work with Marian Wright Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund on nonviolent direct-action organizing to dismantle the cradle-to-prison pipeline, work that includes the organization's Freedom Schools and the annual Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry. She is the author of "To See and To Be Seen," a chapter in *I Was in Prison: United Methodist Perspectives on Prison Ministry*, edited by James M. Shopshire Sr., et al., and numerous other writings.

2021

*Right here Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness*

Amy G. Oden

Christians have always practiced mindfulness. Yet, from the popular landscape of mindfulness movement, you'd never know that. Where is the Christian voice in this fast-growing movement? Many Christians practice mindfulness outside of church and believe it does not belong to our faith tradition. This book reveals the Christian roots of mindfulness and the actual practices that, when reclaimed, deepen the life of faith and the power of our mission of love in the world. When we understand how radical it is to live in God's presence right here, right now, our lives are transformed toward mercy, justice and abundant life.

Amy Oden shows how the practice of Christian mindfulness begins with the teachings of Jesus and continues throughout Christian history. It also includes step-by-step instructions for the practice of Christian mindfulness today. Pastors and leaders will find this book useful on the ground as they curate current culture and guide Christians in spiritual practices.

"... this is the best introduction to Christian mindfulness I have read." —Shaun Lambert, Senior Minister of Stanmore Baptist Church, United Kingdom

2021

*Sleep, Pray, Heal: A Path to Wholeness & Well-Being (Healing Memoir Book 1)*

Donna Fado Ivery

When a two hundred pound glass partition fell on Donna Fado Ivery's head resulting in brain injury, disability, and chronic pain, she could no longer count on walking, speaking, or thinking. How would she care for her infant, her preschooler, her husband, and herself? How would she continue to serve as

pastor? With humor and humility, this inspirational memoir speaks to Donna's struggle through medical, social, and church prejudice with the abiding support of family and the Holy Spirit. *Sleep, Pray, Heal* charts the path through hardship and despair and offers a map—through scripture, theology, poetry, painting, and storytelling—to faith, healing, recovery and well-being. *Sleep, Pray, Heal* shares good news in a novel way.

2021

*The JOurneY Between Us: My Faith Walk: Overcoming Grief to Finding JOY in the Journey*

Lisa McGrath

Author Lisa McGrath is passionate about her faith, and it has been her lifeline through all the trials and tragedies she and her family have endured.

*The JOurneY Between Us* tells the inspiring story of how Lisa's faith guided her through several unthinkable events that shook her world to its core. That same faith allowed her to grow as she learned to trust God's plan and perfect timing. In their darkest hours, she and her family turned to God, and that has made all the difference on their path together. Now she recalls the experiences of her life and reveals the ways that she has been blessed through friends and family with the support and strength she needed to persevere and find hope, peace, love, and especially joy in her journey.

2021 \*\*\*Youth

*They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems*

David Bowles

Twelve-year-old Güero is Mexican American, at home with Spanish or English and on both sides of the river. He's starting 7th grade with a woke English teacher who knows how to make poetry cool.

In Spanish, "Güero" is a nickname for guys with pale skin, Latino or Anglo. But make no mistake: our red-headed, freckled hero is pure mexicano, like Canelo Álvarez, the Mexican boxer. Güero is also a nerd--reader, gamer, musician--who runs with a squad of misfits like him, Los Bobbys. Sure, they get in trouble like anybody else, and like other middle-school boys, they discover girls. Watch out for Joanna! She's tough as nails.

But trusting in his family's traditions, his accordion and his bookworm squad, he faces seventh grade with book smarts and a big heart. Life is tough for a border kid, but Güero has figured out how to cope. He writes poetry.

2022

*Glimpses of Heaven: God's Gifts of Grace in Daily Life*

Roela Victoria Rivera

Life is amazingly full of God's grace both as a mystery and a miracle! The Scripture timelessly reveals that God's abiding grace is infinite and sufficient for all His creation from the beginning to the end of time! God's grace is present often in the most unexpected times and places through people and events in simple and spectacular ways!

As a woman of faith, Diaconal Minister and Mission Worker Roela Victoria Rivera presents her new inspirational book of devotions and prayers. She hopes to give you blessed opportunities to experience God's grace in many situations and conditions in life like glimpses of heaven on earth. Roela had mysterious experiences of seeing the beauty and glory of heaven and hearing the powerful voice of God three times ---- at age 10, at age 18 and again in 2002 when she had a near-death experience. Then, after a mild stroke in 2004, she lost her clear eyesight, but not her vision. Since then, even though she is legally blind, Roela has been steadfast in her faith and her covenant to fulfill God's Divine new plan, and purpose for her new life. In this new book, Roela hopes to continue to inspire many people and help them to deepen their faith and translate it into action: to learn to live the art of righteous and grateful living; and to enjoy and cherish the simple joys of life. This treasure book offers some inspiring and interesting faith stories, prayers and poetry written by this author with some testimonies by gifted friends and family. It also features Roela's selected water color paintings in the refreshing Oriental free style done before and after she became legally blind. Even with her vision challenge and physical limitations, Roela often travels with her husband Jun, who is her partner in life and ministry, service and witness, to share God's love, grace, hope, and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

2022

*Love Is the Way: Holding On to Hope in Troubling Times*

Bishop Michael Curry with Sara Grace

Much of the world met Bishop Michael Curry, the first African American to lead the Episcopal Church, when he delivered his sermon on the redemptive power of love at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle. Here, he expands on this message by inspiring readers to discover the gifts they need in order to live the way of love in a world that faces seemingly insurmountable challenges: deep reservoirs of hope and resilience, simple wisdom, the discipline of nonviolence, and unshakable regard for human dignity.

2022

*The Time Is Now: A Call to Uncommon Courage*

Joan Chittister

A beloved nun and social activist offers a soul-stirring guide for all who feel disillusioned and dissatisfied with the power-hungry institutions and systems of this world. Pairing scriptural insights with narratives of the truth-tellers that came before us, Sister Joan Chittister offers a compelling vision for readers to

combat complacency and to propel ourselves toward creating a world of justice, freedom, peace, and empowerment.

2022 \*\*\*Children

*When God Made the World*

Matthew Paul Turner

For little readers who love science and wonder about the beginning of all things, this whimsical journey through creation focuses on the complex way that God created our awe-inspiring universe, including the biodiversity of life on our planet and the intricacies of a vast solar system. Accompanying illustrations bring the natural world to vibrant life through rich colors and poignant detail.

2023 \*\*\*Youth

*Community in the Midst of Challenging Times: A Biblical Exploration of Luke 13*

Kenya Cummings

(Mission u Youth Study--United Women in Faith [2022])

In this Mission u Youth Study, organizer and minister Kenya Cummings brings participants on a journey through stories that have anchored Christian communities for millennia, through times of stability and times of turmoil and tragedy. Using study, prayer, reflection, and sharing, participants examine the meanings of the kin-dom of God, also exploring the dynamics of power and empire in light of the gospel.

2023

*Daughter of Cana (Jerusalem Road, Book 1)*

Angela Hunt

Thomas and Tasmin, twin siblings hired to oversee a wedding feast in Cana, worry when the host runs out of wine—until a guest tells Tasmin to have the servants fill the pitchers by the gate with water from the cistern. Reluctantly, she obeys and is amazed when rainwater turns into the finest wine ever tasted in Cana. When Thomas impulsively decides to follow the teacher from Nazareth, he and Tasmin argue. Tasmin can't accept losing her brother to some magician-prophet. She decides to follow the Nazarene's group, do whatever she must to mend the fractured relationship with her brother, and bring him home.

2023 \*\*\*Children

*Freedom, We Sing*

Amyra León and Illustrated by Molly Mendoza

As powerful as it is beautiful, *Freedom, We Sing* is a lyrical picture book designed to inspire and give

hope to readers around the world. Molly Mendoza’s immersive, lush illustrations invite kids to ponder singer-songwriter Amyra León’s poem about what it means to be free.

2023

*I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*

Austin Channing Brown

Austin Channing Brown’s first encounter with a racialized America came at age seven, when she discovered her parents named her Austin to deceive future employers into thinking she was a White man. Growing up in majority-White schools and churches, Austin writes, “I had to learn what it means to love blackness,” a journey that led to a lifetime spent navigating America’s racial divide as a writer, speaker, and expert helping organizations practice genuine inclusion. She writes in incisive detail about her journey to self-worth and the pitfalls that kill our attempts at racial justice. Her stories bear witness to the complexity of America’s social fabric—from Black neighborhoods to private schools in the middle-class suburbs, from prison walls to boardrooms at majority-White organizations.

2023 \*\*\*Children

*Isaiah & the Worry Pack: Learning to Trust God with All Our Fears*

Ruth Goring and Illustrated by Pamela C. Rice

It’s bedtime again, but Isaiah can’t sleep. It seems he’s got too many things on his mind—things he’s worried about. So Mom helps Isaiah imagine what it would be like if each of his worries were a block that he could stash in his backpack. As Isaiah imagines hiking through the woods carrying his worry pack, he discovers the joy and relief of trusting Jesus with everything, especially those worries. This tender story written by poet, visual artist, and children’s author Ruth Goring is paired with Pamela C. Rice’s warm illustrations.

2023 \*\*\*Children

*Our Growing Tree—From Self-Love to the Beloved Community and All of God’s Creation: A Biblical Exploration of Luke 13*

Ilka Vega

(Mission u Children’s Study--United Women in Faith [2022])

In this Mission u Children’s Study by social justice advocate and educator Ilka Vega, participants take a journey of spiritual growth and community building that helps children recognize the diversity of their capacities, spiritual gifts, and talents as well as their responsibilities to care for one another and for all of God’s creation. Through Bible study and reflection, transformative activities, and spiritual practices, participants focus on growing their spiritual gifts and talents and find support in their journeys of self-love, community building, and stewardship of God’s creation.

2023

*The Big Deal of Taking Small Steps to Move Closer to God*

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie

This book by Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, uncovers how to develop a stronger relationship with God and more effective spiritual lifestyle by taking small steps that lead to big changes. McKenzie prescribes small changes that lead to radical closeness to God, and the “big deal” result is a greater ability to biblically address life challenges.

2023

*Until Unity*

Rev. Francis Chan

If unity is so important to the heart of God, why is the church one of the most divided groups on earth? New York Times bestselling author Francis Chan calls for believers and churches everywhere to align hearts with God and start taking seriously God’s numerous commands to unify. While many believe doctrine is at the root of the problem, Chan argues that the real problem is the shallowness or non-existence of our love for each other—rooted in a shallowness in our understanding of the gospel. This is what desperately needs to change.

2023 \*\*\*Children

*What Is God Like?*

Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner, Illustrated by Ying Hui Tan

This picture book by the late Rachel Held Evans and her friend, Matthew Paul Turner, answers what is for many children their first question about God: *What is God like?* Through pictures from the Bible, children see God is like a shepherd, like a star, like a gardener, like the wind, and more. God is a comforter and support. And whenever a child is unsure, *What Is God Like?* encourages young hearts to “think about what makes you feel safe, what makes you feel loved, and what makes you feel brave. That’s what God is like.”

2023

*Who Can We Be Together? A Biblical Exploration of Luke 13*

Candace Simpson

(Mission u Adult Study--United Women in Faith [2022])

In this Mission u Adult Study, Candace Simpson brings participants deeper into Jesus’ teachings in Luke 13 to explore what it means to be in community. As Simpson notes, “For followers of Christ 2,000 years later, it’s important for us to sit with the range of emotions we have in response to these words. It’s not easy to build and sustain communities, especially when there are forces that drain us, exhaust us, and



even push us to act uncharacteristically. And yet, we are called to act on the most ethical principles of our faith so we can witness the kin-dom of God on earth.”

2024

*Abuelita Fe / Abuelita Faith: What Women on the Margins Teach Us About Wisdom, Persistence, and Strength*

Kat Armas

Kat Armas, a second-generation Cuban American, grew up on the outskirts of Miami’s famed Little Havana neighborhood. Her earliest theological formation came from her grandmother, her abuelita, who fled Cuba during the height of political unrest and raised three children alone after her husband passed away. Combining personal storytelling with biblical reflection, Armas shows us how voices on the margins—those often dismissed, isolated, and oppressed because of their gender, socioeconomic status, or lack of education—have more to teach us about following God than we realize. This book is a Christianity Today 2022 Book Award finalist.

2024 \*\*\* Children

*All Will Be Well: Learning to Trust God’s Love*

Lacy Finn Borgo, Illustrations by Rebecca Evans

Mima is very sick, and just thinking about it makes Julian sad and angry. Julian is worried about Mima and wonders if God can hear her or if God cares. Mima explains to Julian that God loves us and God can be trusted—even when we are sad or angry. This gentle story of a grandmother’s love for her granddaughter incorporates the timeless wisdom of Julian of Norwich: Because of God’s great love for us, all will be well. *All Will Be Well* tackles the sensitive subjects of death and grief in a way understood by children when adults read thoughtfully with them.

2024

*Bipolar Faith: A Black Woman’s Journey with Depression and Faith*

Monica Coleman

Coleman examines the ways the legacies of slavery, war, sharecropping, poverty, and alcoholism mask a family history of mental illness. Those same forces accompanied her into the Black religious traditions and Christian ministry. All the while, she wrestled with her own bipolar disorder. *Bipolar Faith* is both a spiritual autobiography and a memoir of mental illness. Citing serendipitous encounters with Black intellectuals like Henry Louis Gates Jr., Angela Davis, and Renita Weems, Coleman offers a rare account of how the modulated highs of Bipolar II can lead to professional success, while hiding a depression that even her doctors rarely believed.

2024

*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*

Robin Wall Kimmerer

As a botanist, Kimmerer is trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. Here, she brings these two lenses together. Drawing on her life as an Indigenous scientist and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. She circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.

2024 \*\*\* Youth

*Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults*

Robin Wall Kimmerer

In this companion book for youth, botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer draws from her experiences as an Indigenous scientist to demonstrate how all living things—from strawberries and witch hazel to water lilies and lichen—provide us with gifts and lessons every day. Adapted for young adults by Monique Gray Smith, this new edition reinforces how wider ecological understanding stems from listening to the earth's oldest teachers: the plants around us. With informative sidebars, reflection questions, and art from illustrator Nicole Neidhardt, *Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults* brings Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the lessons of plant life to a new generation.

2024

*Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred*

Victoria Loorz

Whether disillusioned by the church or unfulfilled by traditional expressions of faith, many of us long for a deeper spirituality. Coping with an unraveling vocation, identity, and planet, Loorz turned to the wanderings of spiritual leaders and the sanctuary of the natural world, eventually co-founding the Wild Church Network and Seminary of the Wild. With an Eco spiritual lens on biblical narratives and a fresh look at a community larger than our own species, *Church of the Wild* uncovers the roots of faith and helps us deepen our commitment to a suffering earth by falling in love with it.

2024

*Colors of Hope: A Devotional Journal from LGBTQIA + Christians*

Melissa B. Loy, Editor

From the Rev. Melissa Lynn Guthrie, director and minister with AllianceQ, comes this much-needed faith-based resource for the LGBTQ+ community, *Colors of Hope* uses the iconic Pride Flag as the core of a nine-week-long reflection and devotional journal. The flag's eight colors are each tied to a specific symbolic theme, inspiring the book's contributors to craft a short essay and a set of several common themes that carry over to each week and invite readers to reflect on the week's theme in different ways.

2024

*Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*

Amy-Jill Levine

Jesus' final days were full of risk. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward. In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience. The book is part of a larger six-week study that is perfect for Lent.

2024

*Glory in the Margins: Sunday Poems*

Nikki Grimes

This collection of poetry from New York Times bestselling author and poet Nikki Grimes explores the many hours Jesus spent with people in the margins. In the book of Job, a suffering man pours out his anguish to his Maker. From the depths of his pain, he reveals a trust in God's goodness stronger than his despair, giving humanity some of the most beautiful and poetic verses of all time. Grimes' poetry reflects a spirit of unvarnished honesty and tenacious hope. Her collection is a gentle, beautiful and provocative collection that opens up Scripture in a fresh and welcome way.

2024 \*\*\* Children

*I Am You: A Book About Ubuntu*

Refiloe Moahioli

In southern Africa, there is a belief called ubuntu—the idea that all are connected. No matter where we're from or who we are, a person is a person through their connections to other people. With simple, lyrical text and charming artwork, this lively picture book, first published in South Africa, is the perfect introduction to the concept of ubuntu for young kids. A celebration of friendship and kindness, the book shows children the many ways that we are all one. Previously published as *We Are One*, this edition of *I Am You* includes editorial revisions.

2024

*Land of Silence*

Tessa Afshar

Before she stole healing by touching the hem of his garment, Elianna was a young girl crushed by guilt. After her only brother is killed in her care, Elianna tries to earn forgiveness by working for her father's textile trade and caring for her family. When another tragedy places Elianna in sole charge of the business, her talent for design brings enormous success, but never absolution. Then illness strikes, isolating Elianna from everyone and stripping everything she has left. No physician can cure her—until she hears whispers of a man whose mere touch can heal.

2024

*Red Lip Theology: For Church Girls Who've Considered Tithing to the Beauty Supply Store When Sunday Morning Isn't Enough*

Candace Marie Benbow

Benbow's essays explore universal themes like heartache, loss, forgiveness, and sexuality, and she unflinchingly empowers women who struggle with feeling loved and nurtured by church culture. Honoring her single mother's love and triumphs—and mourning her unexpected passing—she finds herself forced to shed restrictions she'd been taught to place on her faith practice. And by embracing alternative spirituality and womanist theology and confronting staid attitudes on body positivity and LGBTQ+ rights, Benbow challenges religious institutions, faith leaders, and communities to reimagine how faith can be a tool of liberation and transformation.

2024

*The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*

Jan Richardson Wanton

When Jan Richardson unexpectedly lost her husband and creative partner, she did what she had long known how to do: She wrote blessings. These were no sugar-coated blessings. They minimized none of the pain and bewilderment that came in the wake of a wrenching death. With these blessings, she entered into the depths of shock, anger, and sorrow. From those depths, she has brought forth words that, with heartbreaking honesty, offer surprising comfort and stunning grace. Those who know loss will find kinship among these pages.

2024 \*\*\* Children

*The Good for Nothing Tree*

Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

A tiny fig tree needs time to grow. But how much time? Is the fig tree good for nothing? Inspired by the parable of the barren fig tree, *The Good for Nothing Tree* reminds us readers that the sweetest figs, like

many other things, are worth waiting for. Not every tree—and not every child—grows at the same pace. Yet patience, care, and love can change everything, making what may appear “good for nothing” very good. A note about the parable’s New Testament origins and a recipe are included.

2024

*The Seeker and the Monk: Everyday Conversations with Thomas Merton*

Sophronia Scott

What if we truly belong to each other? What if we are all walking around shining like the sun? Mystic, monk, and activist Thomas Merton asked those questions in the 20th century. Writer Sophronia Scott asks them today. Here, Scott mines the extensive private journals of one of the most influential contemplative thinkers of the past for guidance on how to live in these fraught times. As a Black woman who is not Catholic, Scott holds spirited, and intimate conversations on race, ambition, faith, activism, nature, prayer, friendship, and love.

2024

*The Wisdom of Your Body: Embodiment as the Road to Healing, Wholeness, and Connection*

Hillary L. McBride

Psychologist and award-winning researcher Hillary McBride explores the broken and unhealthy ideas we have inherited about our body. Embodiment is the way we are in the world, and our embodiment is heavily influenced by who we have been allowed to be. McBride shows that many of us feel disembodied due to colonization, racism, sexism, and patriarchy—destructive systems that rank certain bodies as less valuable, beautiful, or human than others. Embracing our embodiment can liberate us from these systems. *The Wisdom of Your Body* offers a compassionate, healthy, and holistic perspective on embodied living.

2024

*This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation and the Stories That Make Us*

Cole Arthur Riley

In her stunning debut, the creator of Black Liturgies weaves stories from three generations of her family alongside reflections to discover necessary rituals that connect us with belonging, dignity, and liberation. Here, Arthur Riley reflects on stories of her grandmother and father and how they revealed an embodied, dignity-affirming spirituality, not only in what they believed but in the act of living itself. Writing of her own childhood and coming to self, she boldly explores some of the most urgent questions of life and faith. *This Here Flesh* speaks to anyone who suspects our stories might have something to say to us.

2024

*We Go On: Finding Purpose in All of Life's Sorrows and Joys*

John Onwuchekwa

Rich with black-and-white photography, powerful stories, and life-changing reflections from the book of Ecclesiastes, *We Go On* calls you to find the true answer to the question: Why am I here? This hope-filled exploration of this biblical book of wisdom turns our attention to what our true purpose is and how to let that purpose shape our relationships, career, and life choices. Along with biblical insights, Onwuchekwa weaves together meaningful challenges that, even from difficult beginnings, we can continue to trust God's path.

2024

*Why Do I Feel Like This?: Understand Your Difficult Emotions and Find Grace to Move Through*

Peace Amadi

Sometimes life is a mess, and we get overwhelmed by all sorts of conflicting, difficult emotions. In this book, psychology professor and personal development coach Dr. Peace Amadi helps readers navigate the complexity of their emotions, from discouragement and hurt to trauma and depression. She explains the dynamics underlying what they feel and gives practical resources for living through their emotions in healthy ways. With insights from both psychology and Scripture, this book offers a clear plan to get peace and freedom back and find joy again.

2024

*Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of Torah and the Throne*

Wilda C. Gafney Westminster

From Hebrew biblical scholar, professor, and Episcopal priest Wilda Gafney comes this in-depth and creative exploration of the well- and lesser-known women of the Hebrew Scriptures. Using her own translations, Gafney offers a Midrashic interpretation of the biblical text that is rooted in the African-American preaching tradition to tell the stories of a variety of female characters, many of whom are often overlooked and nameless. Gafney employs a solid understanding of womanist and feminist approaches to biblical interpretation and the sociohistorical culture of the ancient Near East.

2024 \*\*\* Children

*Wonder Awaits!*

Caroline Hamilton-Arnold

Have you ever noticed that children are always listening, seeing, touching, smelling, tasting—and thinking? *Wonder Awaits!* encourages children of all ages to use those senses and everyday activities to see the miracles of creation. Kids are encouraged to get close, get dirty, look carefully, look up, make art,

make friends, be brave, be curious, be present, and be amazed, all activities adults should do too. Accompanying the words are dozens of photos portraying children from two to six years of age representing the practices encouraged by the text.

2024

*Worth It: Overcome Your Fears and Embrace the Life You Were Made For*

Britt Baron

Growing up in an evangelical megachurch, trying to fit neatly inside the boundaries of her faith, and wrestling with her true self caused Barron to feel boxed in by her fears and unable to realize her full potential. All that changed when she met a girl named Sami, fell in love, and chose to break free from the judgement of others in favor of a full and vibrant life. In *Worth It*, Barron tells her story to inspire readers, encouraging us all to consider other perspectives surrounding race, religion, and sexuality, including fears that keep us from evolving toward acceptance.