

## SMPC Food For Thought Book List for 2021-2022

**September 2, 2021**

**The Dearly Beloved.**

**Faith Practices**

By Cara Wall.

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Charles and Lily, James and Nan. They meet in Greenwich Village in 1963 when Charles and James are jointly hired to steward the historic Third Presbyterian Church through turbulent times. Their differences threaten to tear them apart. Charles is destined to succeed his father as a professor at Harvard, until an unorthodox lecture about faith leads him to ministry. How then, can he fall in love with Lily, intellectual and stern, after she tells him that she will never believe in God? James spent much of his youth angry at his alcoholic father and avoiding his anxious mother. Nan grew up in Mississippi, the devout daughter of a minister. James's escape from his circumstances leads him to Nan and, despite his skepticism of hope, her gentle, constant faith changes the course of his life.

**October 7, 2021**

***Before I Let You Go*** by Kelly Rimmer      **Substance Abuse Prevention Month**

The 2:00 a.m. call is the first time Lexie Vidler has heard her sister's voice in years. Annie is a drug addict, a thief, a liar, and in trouble. Lexie has always bailed Annie out, given her money, a place to sleep, sent her to every kind of rehab. This time, she's not just strung out—she's pregnant and in premature labor. If she goes to the hospital, she'll lose custody of her baby—maybe go to prison. As the weeks unfold, Lexie finds herself caring for her fragile newborn niece while her ordered life is collapsing around her. She's in danger of losing her job, and her fiancé only has so much patience for Annie's drama.

**November 4, 2021**

***Human (Kind): How Reclaiming Worth and Embracing Radical Kindness Will Bring Us Back Together*** by Ashlee Eiland.    NF.      **What is Gabriel's Kindness Day?**

Long before polls, protests, and political issues divided us, we were joined by a humanness that God considered *very good*. Created in his image, we reflected the height and depth of God's loving-kindness, but our discord has blinded us to the *imago Dei* in us all. In this collection of essays, Ashlee Eiland shares her story of being a black woman living on two sides of the fence: as the token black girl in majority-white spaces and as the "whitewashed" black girl in majority-black spaces. She learns that extending kindness toward every person—regardless of social status, political views, or religious beliefs—gives us hope and rekindles our common humanity.      **AND**

***HumanKind: Changing the World One Small Act at a Time.*** by Brad Aronson.    NF

Brad Aronson's life changed in an instant when his wife, Mia, was diagnosed with leukemia. After her diagnosis, Brad spent most of the next 2 1/2 years either by her side as she received treatment or trying to shield their son, Jack, from the worst of Mia's illness. Amid the stress of waiting for the treatment to work, Brad and Mia were met by an outpouring of kindness from friends, family, and strangers. Inspired by the kindness, Brad began writing about people who rescued his family, and about acts of kindness that transform lives across the globe every day.

**December 2, 2021**

***The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett*** by Annie Lyons.      **Conquering Lonliness**

Eudora Honeysett is done with this noisy, moronic world. She has witnessed the indignities and suffering of old age and has lived a full life. At eighty-five, she isn't going to leave things to chance. Her end will be on her terms. With one call to a clinic in Switzerland, a plan is set in motion. Then she meets ten-year-old Rose Trewidney, a whirling, pint-sized rainbow of cheer. All Eudora wants is to be left alone to set her affairs in order. Instead, she finds herself on adventures with Rose and the recently widowed Stanley—tea, shopping, trips to the beach, birthday celebrations, and pizza parties.

**January 6, 2022**

***Rainwater Secret*** by Monica Shaw.      **World Missions**

A historical fiction novel about a woman who becomes a missionary in Africa after the death of her mother. Single and feeling there is nothing left for her in England, Anna volunteers with the Medical Missionaries of Mary to teach the leper children in Africa. Life as Anna is forever changed as she learns the culture that would banish its sick, disfigured, and crippled to the jungles. Babies are left to die, children chased away, and the aged are abandoned. Anna's life is an adventure as she travels from one village to another across a land with few passable roads, rickety bridges, and weather that turns a calm river into a roiling death trap.

**February 3, 2022**

***The Last Ordinary Hour*** by Kathy Izard.

♥ Month ♥

Kathy wrote *The Last Ordinary Hour: Living life now that nothing will ever be the same* to help you ask the same questions in your life-- what really matters and how do you want to live? Her new book is the story of how we learn to live with radical uncertainty, and she hopes her story can help you live in faith not fear.

### **March 3, 2022**

***The Girl With the Louding Voice*** by Abi Dare. **Women's Voices in History**

This is an inspiring story of a teenage girl growing up in a rural Nigerian village who longs to get an education so that she can find her "louding voice" and speak up for herself. It is a heartbreaking and triumphant tale about the power of fighting for your dreams. Despite the obstacles in her path, Adunni never loses sight of her goal of escaping the life of poverty she was born into so that she can build the future she chooses for herself and help other girls like her do the same.

### **April 7, 2022**

***How the Penguins Saved Veronica.*** By Hazel Prior. **National Penguin Day 8/25**

Eighty-five-year-old Veronica McCreedy is estranged from her family and wants to find a cause to leave her fortune to. When she sees a documentary about penguins being studied in Antarctica, she tells the scientists she's coming to visit—and won't take no for an answer. Shortly after arriving, she convinces the team to rescue an orphaned baby penguin. He becomes part of life at the base, and Veronica's closed heart starts to open. Her grandson, Patrick, comes to Antarctica to make one last attempt to get to know his grandmother. Together, Veronica, Patrick, and even the scientists learn what family, love, and connection are all about.

### **May 5, 2022**

***One by One by One: Making a Small Difference Amid a Billion Problems***

by Aaron Berkowitz NF. **Brain Tumor Awareness Month**

Dr. Aaron Berkowitz had just finished his neurology training when he was sent to Haiti on his first assignment with Partners In Health. There, he meets Janel, a 23-year-old man with the largest brain tumor Berkowitz or any of his neurosurgeon colleagues have ever seen. Determined to live up to Partners In Health's mission statement "to bring the benefits of modern medical science to those most in need," he tries to save Janel's life by bringing him to Boston for a 12-hour surgery. He traces what he learns and grapples with trying to bridge the gap between one of the world's richest countries and one of the world's poorest to make the first big save of his career. **AND**

***Finding Chika*** by Mitch Albom. NF

Chika Jeune was born three days before the earthquake that decimated Haiti in 2010. She spent her infancy in a landscape of extreme poverty, and when her mother died giving birth to a baby brother, Chika was brought to The Have Faith Haiti Orphanage that Albom operates in Port Au Prince. With no children of their own, the children who live, play, and go to school at the orphanage have become family to Mitch and his wife, Janine. At age five, Chika is diagnosed with something a doctor there says, "No one in Haiti can help you with." Mitch and Janine bring Chika to Detroit, and she becomes a part of their lives, as they embark on a journey to find a cure.

### **June 2, 2022**

***Yellow Wife.*** By Sadeqa Johnson. **The Importance of Juneteeth**

Born on a plantation in Charles City, Virginia, Pheby Delores Brown has lived a relatively sheltered life. Shielded by her mother's position as the estate's medicine woman and cherished by the Master's sister, she is set apart from the others on the plantation, belonging to neither world. She'd been promised freedom on her eighteenth birthday, but instead of the idyllic life she imagined with her love, Essex Henry, Pheby is forced to leave the only home she has ever known. She finds herself thrust into the bowels of slavery at the Devil's Half Acre, a jail in Richmond, Virginia, where the enslaved are broken, tortured, and sold every day.

### **July 7, 2022**

***Looking For Salvation at the Dairy Queen*** by Susan Gregg Gilmore. **Ice Cream!** 🍦

It's the early 1970s. The town of Ringgold, Georgia, has a population of 1,923, one traffic light, one Dairy Queen, and one Catherine Grace Cline. The daughter of Ringgold's third-generation Baptist preacher, Catherine Grace is quick-witted, stubborn, and dying to escape small-town life. Every Saturday afternoon, she sits at the Dairy Queen, eating Dilly Bars and plotting her getaway to Atlanta. When the dream becomes a reality, she packs her bags, leaving her family and the boy she loves to claim the life she's always imagined. But before things have even begun to get off the ground in Atlanta, tragedy brings Catherine Grace back home.

### **August 4, 2022**

***Big Lies in a Small Town*** by Diane Chamberlain. **American Art Appreciation Month**

**North Carolina, 2018:** Morgan Christopher's life has been derailed. Taking the fall for a crime she did not commit, her dream of a career in art is put on hold—until a mysterious visitor makes her an offer that will get her released from prison. Her assignment: restore an old post office mural in a sleepy southern town. Morgan knows nothing about art restoration, but desperate to be free, she accepts.

**North Carolina, 1940:** Anna Dale, an artist from New Jersey, wins a national contest to paint a mural for the post office in Edenton, NC. Alone in the world and in need of work, she accepts. What she doesn't expect is to find herself immersed in a town where prejudices run deep, where people are hiding secrets behind closed doors, and where the price of being different might just end in murder.

**September 1, 2022**

***Dear Edward*** by Ann Napolitano.      **Finding Meaning in our Lives**

One summer morning, twelve-year-old Edward Adler, his older brother, his parents, and 183 other passengers board a flight in Newark headed for Los Angeles. Among them are a Wall Street wunderkind, a young woman coming to terms with an unexpected pregnancy, an injured veteran returning from Afghanistan, a business tycoon, and a free-spirited woman running away from her husband. Halfway across the country, the plane crashes. Edward is the sole survivor. Edward's story captures the attention of the nation, but he struggles to find a place in a world without his family. He continues to feel that a part of himself has been left in the sky, forever tied to the plane and all his fellow passengers. But he makes an unexpected discovery—one that will lead him to answers of some of life's most profound questions.