

# FAITH FORMATION INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITIES

## READS, PODCASTS & WEBSITES

The adult education committee at NPPC encourages you to explore some of the many books, podcasts, websites and magazines that will assist you on your faith journey. Along the way you will discover new perspectives, current affairs in the church and engaging Bible study.

### **Love is the Way**

As the descendant of slaves and the son of a civil rights activist, Bishop Michael Curry's life illustrates massive changes in our times. Much of the world met Bishop Curry 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 his message of hope in an inspirational road map for living the way of love, illuminated with moving lessons from his own life. Through the prism of his faith, ancestry, and personal journey, *Love Is the Way* shows us how America came this far and, more important, how to go a whole lot further. Here's a link to Brené Brown's interview with Curry about the book:

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-bishop-michael-curry-on-love-hope-in-troubling-times/>

### **The Hope of Glory**

For Jon Meacham, as for believers worldwide, the events of Good Friday and Easter reveal essential truths about Christianity. A former vestryman of Trinity Church Wall Street and St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, Meacham delves into that intersection of faith and history in this meditation on the seven phrases Jesus spoke from the cross.

Beginning with "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" and ending with "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," Meacham captures for the reader how these words epitomize Jesus's message of love, not hate; grace, not rage; and, rather than vengeance, extraordinary mercy. For each saying, Meacham composes an essay on the origins of Christianity and how Jesus's final words created a foundation for oral and written traditions that upended the very order of the world.

### **The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently**

Esteemed Bible scholars and teachers Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler take readers on a guided tour of the most popular Hebrew Bible passages quoted in the New Testament to show what the texts meant in their original contexts and then how Jews and Christians, over time, understood those same texts. Passages include the creation of the world, the role of Adam and Eve, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the book of Jonah, and Psalm 22, whose words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," Jesus quotes as he dies on the cross.

### **Sermon on the Mount**

The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, contains some of Jesus most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples, and to the others who first heard them? How do they enhance our reading of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, and how do they speak across the centuries to listeners today? How, if we pay careful attention to his words, does Jesus provide us a road map to living as God would have us live?

**The Christian Century**, is considered the flagship magazine of US mainline religious news with comments on theological, moral, and cultural issues, books, movies, and music reviews. They also have a weekly newsletter with book suggestions and a podcast.

**The Sojourners magazine and Sojourners' online publication** sit at the intersection of faith, politics, and culture. They describe their publication as coverage that goes beyond the trending headlines to uncover and explore in depth the hidden injustices in the world around us. Our call to prophetic interrogation means we seek the truth as informed by our biblical roots. Sojourners' three key commitments are racial and social justice, life and peace, and environmental stewardship. As such, much of the coverage and advocacy explores the following issue areas:

- Climate Justice
- Economic Justice
- Nonviolence and Peace
- Immigration
- Racial Justice
- Women and Girls Digesting the scriptures to fertilize your spiritual garden.

**BibleWorm:** Robert Williamson from Hendrix College and husband of our Lindy Vogado has a weekly podcast titled BibleWorm. He and his co-host Amy Robertson describe their narrative lectionary as digesting the scriptures to fertilize your spiritual garden.

**Free Yale Courses:** For those of you who want to get serious about study, there are two free Yale online courses: <http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies> . One student describes them this way. Both are great, and the Old Testament one is really, really fascinating. I especially love her discussion on Job.

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## BOOKS—ON THE SUBJECT OF RACE

- The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
- The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin
- Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- White Fragility by Robin Diangelo
- The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex
- Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston
- How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X Kendi. There is also a young adult version of this one.
- The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X by Les and Tamara Payne
- Me and White Supremacy by Layla Saad
- Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson
- America's Original Sin by Jim Wallis
- The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson
- The Youngest Marcher by Cynthia Levinson (Children)
- All American Boys, by Jason Reynolds (Children)

- Girl Dreaming by Brown Woodson (Children)
- White Flour by David LaMotte (Children)

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## BOOKS—ON FAMILY, MIRACLES, AND MYSTERY

**The Return:** When Hisham Matar was a nineteen-year-old university student in England, his father went missing under mysterious circumstances. Hisham would never see him again, but he never gave up hope that his father might still be alive. Twenty-two years later, he returned to his native Libya in search of the truth behind his father’s disappearance. The Return is the story of what he found there. The Pulitzer Prize citation hailed The Return as “a first-person elegy for home and father.” Transforming his personal quest for answers into a brilliantly told universal tale of hope and resilience.

**Gilead; Home; Lila and Jack** by Marilynne Robinson. These novels offer a vibrant, realistic picture of faith unfolding over decades amidst a community of people in a particular place. These are wonderful books by an acclaimed modern writer. Start with Gilead.

Frederick Buechner’s **Godric** is a fictionalized account of a 12th century saint, but a saint with all moral complexities and contradictions of a deeply complex man. Saints produce their own challenges to write about narratively, as you have to navigate between hagiography and a smear upon the historical figure, but Buechner handles it with aplomb. What’s more, the story’s told in such a lyrical, poetic fashion that every line sings with rhythm and power.

**Peace Like a River** by Leif Enger focuses on miracles and mystery, on family love and healing and our hope of heaven—and also of the sometimes helplessly tragic consequences of our choices. This is a 5-star read. A subsequent novel, Virgil Wander, is very nearly as good (which is not faint praise).

**Anything fiction or non-fiction by Wendell Berry.**

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## PODCASTS, LISTENS, WEBSITES AND MAGAZINES

**On Being** podcast Interview with Bryan Stevenson

**With Heart and Voice** [From Classical 91.5 WXXI-FM](#)

With Heart and Voice® is a weekly program of sacred choral and organ music that features recordings from around the world. Exploring the ever-growing treasury of works for life’s spiritual side, its seasons and celebrations, With Heart and Voice presents choral and organ music of many faiths, cultures and nationalities, and over a thousand years of celebration. Hosted by Peter DuBois, the program celebrates the seasons of the liturgical year and focuses on the richness and beauty of sacred music.

**Equal Justice Initiative** <https://eji.org/>

<http://www.theacademy.com/> is another great place to explore by yourself. Plenty of videos on Presbyterian beliefs and Bible study.

**Englewood Review:** <https://englewoodreview.org/> This is a free newsletter that introduces new and classic materials for those interested in theology and Bible study. Some great suggestions include poetry to go with each lectionary reading. Launched in 2008, The Englewood Review of Books is a weekly online

book review published by Englewood Christian Church on the Near Eastside of Indianapolis. They focus on covering books related to the themes of community, mission, imagination, and reconciliation, and hope to cultivate a vision of [Reading for the Common Good](#), a way of reading that is driven primarily not by one's personal desires but by an attentiveness to the communities in which we are embedded: church, family, neighborhood, workplace. The books they review are not necessarily books from the "Christian market," but chosen to foster Christian faithfulness in our increasingly Post-Christian age.

**The ERB podcast**, an ongoing, thoughtful conversation about the reading life is brought to you by the editors and contributors to the Englewood Review of Books. Co-hosted by [C. Christopher Smith](#) and [Jen Pollock Michel](#), and joined by a rotating cast of ERB contributors, panelists discuss how they engage in reading, what it means to read well, and of course the books and writers they enjoy. Expect lively discussions about books from all genres, from a rotating group of writers and readers who care about reading well.

Robert Williamson from Hendrix College and husband of our Lindy Vogado has a weekly podcast titled **BibleWorm**. He and his co-host Amy Robertson describe their narrative lectionary as digesting the scriptures to fertilize your spiritual garden.

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**The History in the Bible Podcast** is a layman's guide to a century and more of research into the Biblical texts and the archaeological evidence behind them. This podcasts explore the religion of ancient Israel and the development of Christianity. <https://www.historyinthebible.com>

Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture has a new web portal, **Talking About Race**. It provides digital tools, online exercises, video instructions, scholarly articles, and more than 100 multimedia resources tailored for educators, parents, and caregivers, as well as individuals committed to racial equality.

**PCUSA**: <https://www.pcusa.org> is our website for all things going on in the wider church.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/swords-plowshares/> Check out this blog to see some of the peacemaking efforts of PCUSA