

Do you love books and reading? If so, you are warmly invited to come and join us at Book Club this year. All church members and friends are welcome! We meet the fourth Monday of each month except for December this year where we meet on the third Monday, with the first meeting to be held September 28 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:15. We are going to hold our meetings via Zoom for the next few months. You will receive the Zoom meeting announcement a few days before the meeting. You do not have to commit to the whole year of reading; feel free to join us for any of the discussions. But once you come, you may find that all this year's selections sound good. Hope to see you there in September. All the reviews below are adapted from **Amazon Reviews**.

BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS for 2020-2021

September 28, 2020

A Good Time for the Truth : Race in Minnesota : Sun Yung Shin. 2016. 240p.

In this provocative book, sixteen of Minnesota's best writers provide a range of perspectives on what it is like to live as a person of color in Minnesota. They give readers a splendid gift: the gift of touching another human being's inner reality, behind masks and veils and politeness. They bring us generously into experiences that we must understand if we are to come together in real relationships.

October 26, 2020

The Scapegoat : Daphne du Maurier. 1957. 348p.

Two men—one English, the other French—meet by chance in a provincial railway station and are astounded that they are so much alike that they could easily pass for each other. Over the course of a long evening, they talk and drink. It is not until he awakes the next day that John, the Englishman, realizes that he may have spoken too much. His French companion is gone, having stolen his identity. For his part, John has no choice but to take the Frenchman's place—as master of a chateau, director of a failing business, head of a large and embittered family, and keeper of too many secrets.

November 23, 2020

A Long Petal of the Sea : Isabel Allende. 2020. 336p.

In the late 1930s, civil war grips Spain. When General Franco and his Fascists succeed in overthrowing the government, hundreds of thousands are forced to flee in a treacherous journey over the mountains to the French border. Among them is Roser, a pregnant young widow, who finds her life intertwined with that of Victor Dalmau, an army doctor and the brother of her deceased love. In order to survive, the two must unite in a marriage neither of them desires.

Together with two thousand other refugees, they embark on the SS *Winnipeg*, a ship chartered by the poet Pablo Neruda, to Chile: “the long petal of sea and wine and snow.” As unlikely partners, they embrace exile as the rest of Europe erupts in world war.

December 21, 2020

The End of Eternity : Isaac Asimov. 1955. 256p.

One of Isaac Asimov's SF masterpieces, this stand-alone novel is a monument of the flowering of SF in the 20th century. It is widely regarded as Asimov's single best SF

novel and one every SF fan should read. Andrew Harlan is an Eternal, a member of the elite of the future. One of the few who live in Eternity, a location outside of place and time, Harlan's job is to create carefully controlled and enacted Reality Changes. These Changes are small, exactly calculated shifts in the course of history made for the benefit of humankind. Though each Change has been made for the greater good, there are always costs.

January 25, 2021

The Poet : Michael Connelly. 1997. 656p.

Death is reporter Jack McEvoy's beat: his calling, his obsession. But this time, death brings McEvoy the story he never wanted to write--and the mystery he desperately needs to solve. A serial killer of unprecedented savagery and cunning is at large. His targets: homicide cops, each haunted by a murder case he couldn't crack. The killer's calling card: a quotation from the works of Edgar Allan Poe. His latest victim is McEvoy's own brother. And his last may be McEvoy himself.

February 22, 2021

Lady Clementine : Marie Benedict. 2020. 336p.

In 1909, Clementine steps off a train with her new husband, Winston. An angry woman emerges from the crowd to attack, shoving him in the direction of an oncoming train. Just before he stumbles, Clementine grabs him by his suit jacket. This will not be the last time Clementine Churchill will save her husband. *Lady Clementine* is the ferocious story of the ambitious woman beside Winston Churchill, the story of a partner who did not flinch through the sweeping darkness of war, and who would not surrender to expectations or to enemies.

March 22, 2021

The Razor's Edge : W. Somerset Maugham. 1944. 320p.

Larry Darrell is a young American in search of the absolute. The progress of this spiritual odyssey involves him with some of Maugham's most brilliant characters - his fiancée Isabel, whose choice between love and wealth have lifelong repercussions, and Elliot Templeton, her uncle, a classic expatriate American snob. The most ambitious of Maugham's novels, this is also one in which Maugham himself plays a considerable part as he wanders in and out of the story, to observe his characters struggling with their fates.

April 26, 2021

The Life We Bury : Allen Eskins. 2014. 303p.

College student Joe Talbert has the modest goal of completing a writing assignment for an English class. His task is to interview a stranger and write a brief biography of the person. With deadlines looming, Joe heads to a nearby nursing home to find a willing subject. There he meets Carl Iverson, and soon nothing in Joe's life is ever the same. Carl is a dying Vietnam veteran--and a convicted murderer. With only a few months to live, he has been medically paroled to a nursing home, after spending thirty years in prison for the crimes of rape and murder. As Joe writes about Carl's life, especially Carl's valor in Vietnam, he cannot reconcile the heroism of the soldier with the despicable acts of the convict.

May 24, 2021

Swede Hollow : Ola Larsmo. 2019. 312p.

When Gustaf and Anna Klar and their three children leave Sweden for New York in 1897, they take with them a terrible secret and a longing for a new life. But their dream of starting over is nearly crushed at the outset: a fire devastates Ellis Island just as they arrive, and then the relentlessly harsh conditions and lack of work in the city make it impossible for Gustaf to support his family. An unexpected gift allows the Klars to make one more desperate move, this time to the Midwest and a place called Swede Hollow.