

Open Book Group 2024-2025 Calendar

3rd Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. in the FPC Parlor and on Zoom

August 15, 2024 -- Sharing what we're reading: No book is scheduled but we will gather to share what we've been independently reading over the summer.

September 19, 2024 -- **Infidel** a memoir by Ayaan Hirsi Ali (non-fiction, led by Laura). The story of the author's geographical journey from Mogadishu to Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and ultimately her experiences in the Netherlands as a refugee and Member of Parliament. The book examines many themes even as it vividly describes the plight of refugees fleeing the chaos of war and famine.

October 17, 2024 -- **The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store** by James McBride (fiction, led by Bridget). In 1972 in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, workers found a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. As these characters' stories overlap and deepen, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the margins of white, Christian America struggle and what they must do to survive.

November 21, 2024 -- **Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype** by Clarissa Pinkola Estes (non-fiction, led by Kamie). Dr. Estés unfolds rich intercultural myths, fairy tales, folk tales, and stories, many from her own traditions, to help women reconnect with the fierce, healthy, visionary attributes of this instinctual nature. Through the stories and commentaries in this remarkable book, we retrieve, examine, love, and understand the Wild Woman, and hold her against our deep psyches as one who is both magic and medicine.

December 19, 2024 -- **The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory: American Evangelicals in the Age of Extremism** by Tim Alberta (non-fiction, led by Janet). Journalist Tim Alberta, son of an evangelical pastor, paints an expansive and profoundly troubling portrait of the American evangelical movement. Through the eyes of televangelists and small-town preachers, celebrity revivalists and everyday churchgoers, is the story of a faith cheapened by ephemeral fear, a promise corrupted by partisan subterfuge, and a reputation stained by perpetual scandal.

January 16, 2025 -- **North Woods: A Novel** by Daniel Mason (fiction, led by Linda). A sweeping novel about a single house in the woods of New England, told through the lives of those who inhabit it across the centuries— "a time-spanning, genre-blurring work of storytelling magic." Following the cycles of history, nature, and even language, *North Woods* shows the myriad, magical ways in which we're connected to our environment, to history, and to one another.

February 20, 2025 -- **Joyful: The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Create Extraordinary Happiness** by Ingrid Fetell Lee (non-fiction, led by Kristina). The author explores how the seemingly mundane spaces and objects we interact with every day have surprising and powerful effects on our mood. Drawing on insights from neuroscience and psychology, she explains why one setting makes us feel anxious or competitive, while another fosters acceptance and delight—and, most importantly, she reveals how we can harness the power of our surroundings to live fuller, healthier, and truly joyful lives.

March 20, 2025 -- **The Super Majority: How the Supreme Court Divided America** by Michael Walman (non-fiction, led by Kay). The author explores the tumultuous 2021-2022 Supreme Court term and draws on history to examine other times the Court veered from the popular will, provoking controversy, and backlash. Walman analyzes the most important new rulings and their implications for the law and for American society, asking: What can we do when the Supreme Court challenges the country?

April 17, 2025 -- **Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life—in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)** by Sarah Hurwitz (non-fiction, led by Julie). A renowned political speechwriter rediscovers Judaism, finding timeless wisdom and spiritual connection in its age-old practices and traditions. In a time when many people have lost faith, her timeless wisdom and graceful writing will delight even the most steadfast skeptics of organized religion.

May 15, 2025 -- **Christianity After Religion: The End of the Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening** by Diana Butler Bass (non-fiction, led by Sandy). The author argues that we are at the beginning of a new spiritual awakening in which individual and families are moving toward less dogmatic and more active practices of their faith which give them the freedom to LIVE as Christians in life-giving and service-driven ways. Her analysis demonstrates how we got to this point and proposes how we can move into a more vital and affirming future.